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ABSTRACT

This report is designed to help law enforcement administrators and officers understand and institute a strategy to help prevent violence through community oriented policing services carried out in collaboration with youth-serving organizations. Descriptions of programs are based on a study that involved a survey of 579 affiliates of 7 national youth-serving organizations: (1) Boys and Girls Clubs of America; (2) Boy Scouts of America; (3) Girls Incorporated; (4) Girl Scouts of America; (5) National Association of Police Athletic Leagues; (6) National 4-H Council and USDA 4-H; and (7) YMCA of the USA. Findings suggest that popular approaches such as boot camps or curfews provide only temporary supervision. Effective prevention approaches are integral to national youth organizations. Partnerships between police and youth-serving organizations that are effective can take many forms. A review of some exemplary programs shows that they have some features in common: they are based on needs assessment and address multiple factors; and they use existing organizations and services, rather than developing new ones. Their experience suggests courses of action for police administrators, directors of youth agencies, and community leaders. An appendix lists some resource organizations. (SLD)

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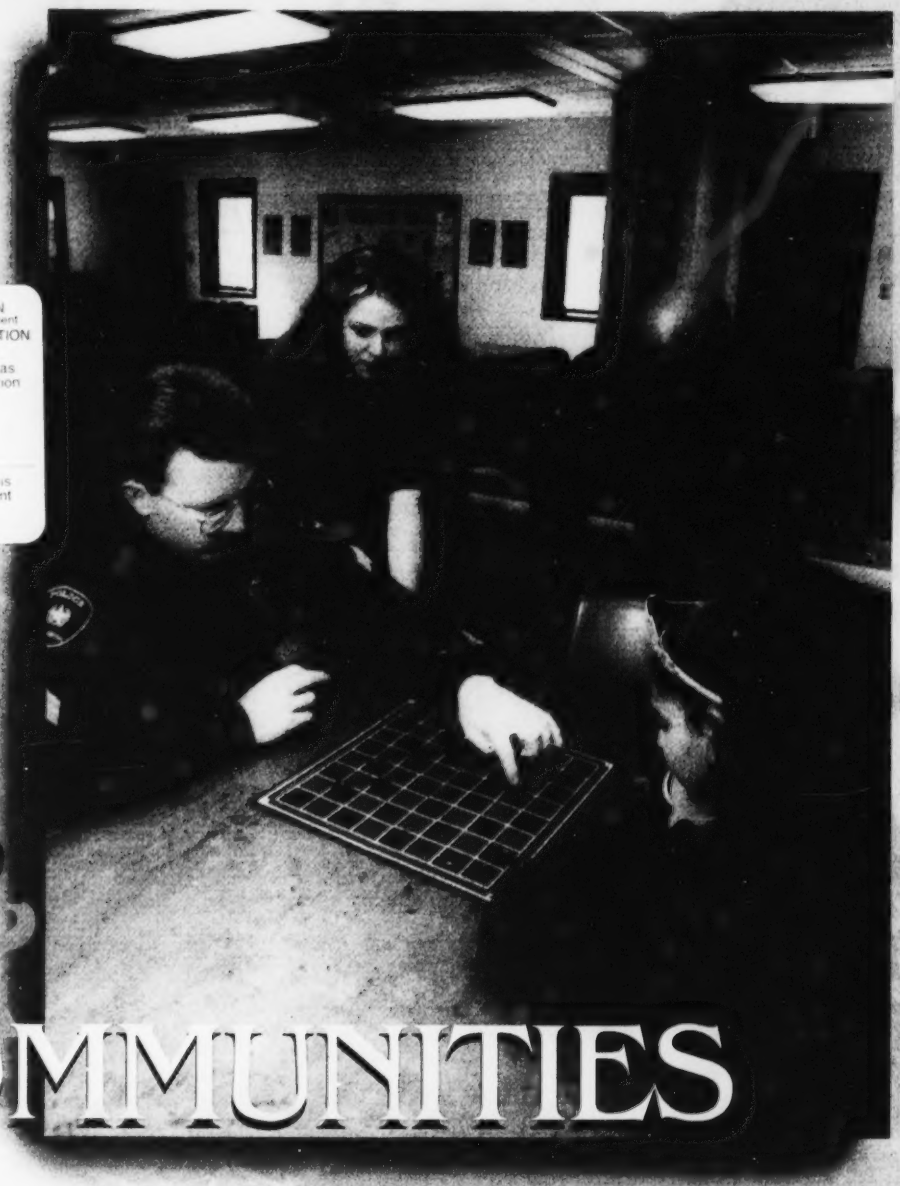

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Kids, COPS, and Communities

by
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June 1998

Issues and Practices in Criminal Justice is a publication series of the National Institute of Justice. Each report presents the program options and management issues in a topic area, based on a review of research and evaluation findings, operational experience, and expert opinion on the subject. The intent is to provide information to make informed choices in planning, implementing, and improving programs and practice in criminal justice.

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Cover Photo: Police take on kids in a friendly game at the Teen Center in Arlington, Texas.

Credit: Paul Knudsen, courtesy Arlington Youth Services

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Foreword

As the President noted in his most recent State of the Union address, most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 3 in the afternoon and 8 at night. Especially in the inner cities, but now in many other areas as well, when children and adolescents are on the street and not in school or at home, they face many risks— involvement in drugs, gangs, crime, as well as victimization.

National youth organizations—such as the Boy Scouts, Girls Incorporated, and 4–H Clubs—have for generations enabled young people to engage in wholesome, enjoyable activities after school, with their peers, in safe places, and under the supervision of experienced adults. They have also helped teenagers develop teamwork and leadership skills while participating in sports, games, crafts, and community service activities. The experience of these organizations is invaluable in preventing delinquency and victimization among our most disadvantaged and at-risk youth.

Meanwhile, the Crime Act of 1994 is putting thousands of police officers into our cities and towns, into community-oriented policing where they can become involved in crime prevention programs in the neighborhoods they serve and participate in neighborhood activities. In many places, officers are getting involved in youth programs, volunteering their time and skills and becoming known to the young participants as friendly, caring adults.

The National Institute of Justice, in cooperation with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, sponsored a study of several national youth organizations that are focusing their efforts on at-risk youth. The study looked particularly at the ways police and local affiliates of these organizations were working together at the neighborhood level. What the study found, as documented on these pages, holds promise for strengthening relationships among youth, police, and the communities they live in. This bodes well not only for the protection of young people but for their future development as responsible citizens.

Jeremy Travis
National Institute of Justice

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Many major contributions to our project and report were made by professionals and volunteers concerned about the need for safer and more productive places for children and teens in the nonschool hours. They include funders, researchers, police, professionals in the field of youth development, city leaders, and a host of service providers. They unstintingly shared their support, data, advice, methodological skills, insights, and time in the hope that the results of this study could help point to better ways for raising school-age children growing up in our cities. I would like to thank them for their cooperation and express my appreciation for their high level of commitment to our Nation's youth. In particular, I would like to thank the following people for their help. Their affiliations and titles are identified as of 1996.

Project Sponsors

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Collaborating National Youth Organization Directors and Their Associates

Boys and Girls Clubs of America: Roxanne Spillett, formerly Northeast Regional Director; James Cox, Director of Urban Services; Frank Sanchez, Jr., Youth Gang Prevention Specialist. Also Desi Day, Executive Director, Alexandria/Olympic Boys and Girls Club.

Boy Scouts of America: Stephen Medlicott, Associate Director of External Communications.

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Staff at the national office of Boy Scouts of America, Executive Directors of Girl Scout Councils, and County Extension Agents around the country delivered our questionnaires to volunteer leaders selected to participate in our survey.

Project Advisers

Professor Delbert Elliott (University of Colorado), Dr. Dennis Kenney (Police Executive Research Forum), Professor Wesley Skogan (Northwestern University), and Dr. Joan Wynn (The Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago).

Office of Justice Programs Advisers for the LINC Survey

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Arlington, Texas

Arlington Youth Services: William Daley, President, Board of Directors; Penny Roswell, Pat Sutton, and Toni Greenwell, Board of Directors; Christine Nusser, formerly Executive Director; Susan Herman, current Executive Director; Gary Givens, Director of Children's Services; Robin Hogan, Director of Adolescent Services; Archie Marshall, Sports Director, and Paul Knudsen, Photography Instructor.

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Before joining the U.S. Department of Justice as Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Dr. Jan Chaiken designed the methods for selecting the survey sample and constructed the sampling frame using data provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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I thank the anonymous program leaders who devoted time and thought to completing our survey. And finally I send my personal gratitude to the many children and teens (especially Harmony), who welcomed me to observe their activities and who provided major insights about secure and productive places in the nonschool hours. You have made clear that we can count on you to create a safer world.

Marcia R. Chaiken

Executive Summary

This report is designed to help law enforcement administrators and officers understand and institute a strategy to help prevent violence—community-oriented policing services carried out in collaboration with youth-serving organizations. Popular police prevention approaches such as D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training), and the McGruff "Take a Bite out of Crime" campaigns have helped prepare police officers to work hand in hand in a variety of ways with local affiliates of national youth-serving organizations. In a growing number of cities, police are working with youth groups and finding that violence involving youth is rapidly decreasing. Some of these approaches are detailed.

Descriptions are based on a LINC study jointly sponsored by the National Institute of Justice and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The research involved a survey of 579 affiliates of 7 national youth-serving organizations: Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Incorporated, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., National Association of Police Athletic Leagues, National 4–H Council and USDA 4–H and Youth Development Service, and YMCA of the USA.* The research also incorporated onsite studies in three cities whose approaches were selected by a panel of experts from among those nominated as exemplary by survey respondents. The experts selected types of approaches most likely to lessen the risk of kids becoming involved in crime, promote wholesome development, and provide increased protection from delinquency and victimization.

The need for effective approaches that will prevent crimes by and against youth is pressing, as our youth continue to be at increasing risk for victimization and serious delinquency, with several factors playing important roles:

- **Age.** Early adolescence is the time of life when people experience the most dramatic increase in violence—both as offenders and as victims. The rate of violent incidents involving strangers increases, but the main rise is due to incidents with acquaintances.
- **Gender.** Until early adolescence, boys and girls are equally in danger from violence, but thereafter boys are at most risk of homicide and girls, sexual assault. In early adolescence, from ages 10 to 14, serious violent acts are committed almost as frequently by girls as by boys, but in later adolescence girls are far less likely to be violent.
- **Families.** Youth who grow up in violent homes are more likely than other youth to become delinquent. But so are even greater numbers of youth who are neglected and lack supervision.
- **Schools.** Children's attachment to school is a powerful predictor of whether or not they will be seriously delinquent. However, even adolescents who do well in school spend most of their waking hours outside school.
- **Neighborhoods.** At greatest risk for violence and victimization are children and adolescents who live in high-crime neighborhoods where deadly weapons are common and readily available.

Children who are frequently exposed to violence at home or school, or—perhaps most important—to unchecked violence among neighborhood children their own age, are most likely to become persistently delinquent and increasingly violent.

Kids are most vulnerable to crime during the nonschool hours when they are least likely to be supervised by teachers or working parents. Violent crimes by juveniles are most likely to be committed between 2:30 in the afternoon and 8:30 at night. Gang-related crimes, too, are more likely to take place in these hours than at any other time of day or night.

The Most Popular Approaches for Dealing With Juvenile Violence Haven't Worked

Despite attempts to "deinstitutionalize" children, locking them up in State and local facilities is still a prime approach. Although these kids temporarily have the supervision they definitely need, once released, nothing else has changed. Other currently popular approaches such as boot camps also just provide temporary supervision. And although curfews theoretically extend the hours of family oversight, the periods when kids are most likely to get into trouble are not covered.

*Information on survey methodology and findings is in the full report from this study, *Raising Our Cities' Children. Safe Productive Places in the After-School Hours*, available as NCJ 170608 from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 800–851–3420. Citations for statistics and studies referenced in this Executive Summary appear in the more detailed chapters that follow.

Many programs available after school—the prime time for youth violence—are either ineffective or counterproductive. Simply providing a supervised place doesn't work (adolescents most at risk for delinquency won't go or may take over the place if they do). Sports, gang-prevention approaches that make members more cohesive, and approaches that simply provide information about the risks or wickedness of delinquency can backfire and make kids more delinquent.

Approaches that researchers have found to be most promising for preventing violence and delinquency are relatively long-term, continuous, comprehensive approaches that involve adults as tutors and mentors who teach children and teens cognitive and social skills and provide them an opportunity to cooperatively practice these competency skills. These approaches are virtually synonymous with the approaches implemented by national youth-serving organizations.

Effective Prevention Approaches Are Integral to National Youth Organizations

Typically, the approaches taken by national youth organizations attempt to ameliorate more than a single factor associated with delinquency. They provide a range of activities appropriate for children of specific ages and different developmental stages, and they continue over the long term. In today's world, where many single parents have low incomes and less time to spend with their children and where many schools are literally and figuratively falling apart, youth-serving organizations can most readily provide the necessary resources children and teens fail to find elsewhere. This is especially important in neighborhoods where all essential resources for children and teens are scarce and crime rates are high.

Youth-serving organizations know that for this at-risk population they need to duplicate the elements that have for generations appealed to their adolescent participants:

- An **environment** in which kids are valued and adolescents are considered resources rather than problems for their community.
- **Activities** that present teens with real challenges and experiences in planning, preparing for, and publicly presenting projects they and their communities truly value.
- Ongoing **outreach** to teens and adults in the community, with messages that are understandable.

Findings of the LINC survey indicate that affiliates of national youth-serving organizations are:

- **Reaching millions of kids.** The Girl Scouts alone have 2.5 million members nationwide. When all youth-serving organizations are included, the total is far larger.
- **Reaching kids in economically depressed urban areas.** Compared to organizations in prosperous neighborhoods, each affiliate in a rundown city neighborhood is serving an average of three times as many participants.
- **Reaching kids already involved in crime as victims or offenders.** Girls Incorporated and Boys and Girls Clubs are furnishing constructive activities for youth in public housing areas where kids formerly wreaked havoc on the property and on each other. Boy Scout Explorer Post leaders are recruiting adolescents in violence-torn neighborhoods and teaching them to work as law enforcement paraprofessionals. Girl Scout Councils are reaching girls in extreme need of adult support, including daughters of women in prison. And 4–H is serving runaway teens, some supporting themselves through prostitution.
- **Experiencing crimes.** Among organizations included in the LINC study, more than half reported that an offense occurred at or immediately outside the primary program site during the program year beginning in the fall of 1993. Most of these offenses were committed by kids, primarily nonparticipants in the organizations.
- **Losing valuable organizational resources to crime.** Three out of four of the organizations reporting at least one violent incident or property crime in the 1993–1994 program year indicated that they suffered economic consequences, or burdens on staff who had to deal with incidents involving offenses committed by and against their participants, or constraints on program operations and activities.
- **Suffering defeat.** Most preventive steps organizations experiencing crime have taken, such as putting locks on doors to prevent unauthorized access to program areas, haven't worked (with the exception of requiring a responsible adult to accompany participants when they leave the program site).

The study found that some organizations experienced much lower rates of crime than one would have expected given their location in rundown neighborhoods in cities with high crime rates. These are organizations that reported more police responsiveness to their needs than other youth-serving organizations. And, as the survey results also indicated, the primary needs of these organizations for police cooperation center on steps to prevent crime rather than to deal with crimes already committed.

Partnerships Between Police and Youth Organizations

The LINC study found that partnerships between police and youth-serving organizations take many forms, from officers providing occasional talks to youth to officers leading groups on an ongoing basis. They also involve police at all ranks—from the chief to the newest police officers.

At the highest level chiefs and top administrators show their support for strong police involvement in crime prevention activities among high-risk youth through their participation in youth organization advisory boards. They provide an example and incentives for their staff members to become voluntary adult leaders. They also emphasize that support of youth organizations is part of community policing.

At the request of the youth-serving organizations, police officers are providing age-appropriate interactive programs that help children and teens realize what to do when faced with common dangerous situations—emergencies when they are home alone, threats and pressures from gang members, "date" rape attempts, or reoccurring violence among family members. Police at all ranks are volunteering to become Boy Scout and Girl Scout leaders for kids in high-crime neighborhoods where troops have been difficult to organize.

Police devote many hours helping to select and monitor juveniles assigned to youth-serving organizations as part of juvenile diversion programs.

The LINC survey and case studies amply show that in many communities, police officers routinely drop in to youth centers or participate more formally in youth center activities. They provide a strong presence that allays community fears about having so many "at-risk" teenagers congregating in the area.

Among the most innovative and fruitful relationships between police and young people have been officers' participation in programs that allow youth organization participants to do "real" policing, as in one LINC study site, where boys and girls remind residents to lock their doors, adolescents conduct overnight surveillance in parks and alleys, and youth carry out other crime prevention projects under police supervision.

Case Studies of Exemplary Approaches

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to nominate exemplary prevention approaches carried out by their organizations or other organizations in their areas. More than 100 approaches were recommended for further study, with advisers to the study unanimously agreeing that case studies to be included in this report should focus on organizations providing (1) collaborative or relatively comprehensive or extensive community programs and approaches or (2) center-based programs with nontraditional staff, hours, or participants in cities or neighborhoods with relatively high rates of crime. All advisers independently used active recruitment of youth at high risk for violence or delinquency as a criterion for selecting the programs they nominated.

One approach selected for study is being implemented in Bristol, Connecticut; one in Arlington, Texas; and two in Spokane, Washington.

The organizations implementing these approaches are affiliated with one or more of the national organizations participating in the study. In addition to their innovative approaches, the selected organizations are implementing traditional youth development practices that may be just as or more beneficial in preventing delinquency than approaches designed solely to prevent youth violence. They are all a vital part of a network of organizations that together are creating safer and more productive environments for children and teens in the nonschool hours.

The innovative approaches can best be understood in the context of the cities in which they are occurring, the needs of youth systematically identified by collaborative efforts, the particular needs the organization was striving to meet, the ongoing collaboration of other youth development organizations to meet these needs, and the collaboration with other private and public agencies—in particular, the police.

Bristol, Connecticut

Many of Bristol's families of French, Polish, Italian, and Irish descent have lived there for generations, but today Bristol's population of 60,000 has become even more ethnically diverse, and goods-producing industries have been outnumbered by service industries; the relatively homogeneous working-class environment has changed. Upscale, middle-class homes are going up in the outlying areas, and the central city is now marked by areas of poverty.

Problems affecting youth have worsened in the past decade. The schools are finding that while rates of teen pregnancy have remained the same for a period of years, younger girls—down to middle-school age—are now having babies. Police and other agencies find that children are committing crimes at younger ages.

Information gathered from schools and State and local agencies, including the Bristol Police Department, led local leaders to the conclusion that community-based services for youth, including afterschool programs, were essential and that a multifaceted collaborative approach would be most effective in bringing these about.

The Bristol Family Center for Boys and Girls

The Family Center is an affiliate of Girls Incorporated. Located on a downtown street in a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood, it attracts children from all over the city to its two-story brick building constructed more than 60 years ago as one of the first Girls Clubs, together with newer additions built in the 1960s, including a large gymnasium, pool, and locker room.

The Family Center is open for activities on weekdays from 6:30 a.m., when preschoolers are dropped off for child care, until 9 p.m. when teens finish swimming, gymnastics, dance classes, or other activities. Two particular programs carried out by the Bristol Family Center are types of youth development programs that have been found by past research to have long-term success in reducing children's involvement in crime and delinquency.

The first, the Bristol Family Center Young Parent Program, helps pregnant and postpartum teens by giving them the option of continuing their education at the center, with trained Family Center staff providing case management and individual counseling. The Family Center also offers these teen mothers and the fathers of their children adult mentoring and peer counseling.

The Family Center's positive support for teen parents is matched by a second program to intervene in the lives of youth at risk of following a delinquent path. The Bristol Police Department and the Youth Service Bureau are the lead agencies in the coalition implementing the juvenile offender diversion program in which the Family Center collaborates. For first-time adolescent offenders involved in minor crimes, a common alternative is restitution through community service; in these cases the Family Center representative has the option of volunteering to place the adolescent as an aide in one of the Family Center programs. These adolescents commonly form a strong bond with staff and stay on as regular participants after their mandated service is completed.

The Bristol Police Department

In addition to their ongoing Juvenile Review Board actions, officers in the police department work directly with children in occasional projects jointly sponsored by youth organizations and the police departments in neighborhoods where children appear to be especially at risk.

Bristol officers also provide special training for youth organization participants on such topics as gang awareness and dealing with babysitting emergencies. Patrol officers regularly drop by youth centers as part of the Bristol Police Department's "Walk-and-Talk" community policing approach.

Arlington, Texas

With a population of more than 270,000, Arlington has a wide range of economic levels within its boundaries. Many of Arlington's new families have school age children and two parents working to maintain affluent lifestyles, while new arrivals have also included families living in poverty. Both long-term residents and recent arrivals are concerned by the city's precipitous growth, its changing nature, and the consequent strain on services.

Crime is also a concern. In 1993, for instance, Tarrant County, which contains all of Arlington and part of Fort Worth, had one of the highest crime rates in Northeast Texas.

To meet these challenges, an extensive spectrum of public and private agencies have collaborated in providing more

services for at-risk youth and for children without supervision and developing a specific plan of action having three primary components:

- Actively recruiting high-risk children and teens to participate in existing centers, including Boys and Girls Clubs Centers and the Arlington Youth Services Multipurpose Center—renamed the Teen Center by the participants who were recruited.
- Creating new centers in unsupervised areas where children and teens were already congregating in the nonschool hours. Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington has taken the lead in this effort.
- Providing licensed childcare in the afterschool hours in all elementary schools and contracting with the three major youth-serving organizations in Arlington to administer the childcare and furnish age-appropriate youth development activities.

The Teen Center

Active recruitment by two outreach workers has resulted in the participation of many teens identified by the police and schools as "at-risk." The vast majority are minority group members, predominantly African-Americans, Hispanics, and people of mixed race. The program is characterized by:

- **Emphasis on observing rules.** All who come to the Teen Center agree to take care of it, obey all laws, respect the neighborhood, and treat each other and staff with respect.
- **Mediation of peer differences.** Part of teens' preference for playing basketball in the Teen Center is not because of the basketball court but because adults keep the place safe. They play basketball on the street, but since there is no staff member on the street to referee when issues of respect arise, they fight.
- **Opportunities for teens to make decisions.** Both informally and more formally—through 3-month positions as Teen Center "youth worker" employees and through work in the neighborhood—youth are encouraged to make decisions and take responsibility.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington

In addition to afterschool childcare programs in elementary schools, Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington provides programs at six locations in different parts of the city, where game rooms and quiet areas provide children and teens with safe recreation. They receive help with school assignments and engage in skill-building activities that are fun to do.

Arlington Police Department

The Arlington Police Department carries out key and highly visible efforts to create safer places for school-age children, including more than 25 relatively short, age-appropriate youth education programs covering a range of issues, as well as more sustained youth approaches such as the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program.

As part of their duties, the police department's "school resource officers" play a key role in Arlington's Crime Prevention Action Plan. They maintain contacts with and actively refer children to other community agencies providing services for children, including the Scouting organizations, Camp Fire, Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, and Big Brothers and Sisters. School resource officers are also encouraged to become Boy Scout Explorer Post leaders.

Patrol officers, too, provide ongoing formal support for safe afterschool activities, such as carrying out background checks of the youth organizations' staff before they are hired. As part of their regular patrol, officers stop in at youth centers when programs are in progress and stay at least a few minutes to talk to the young participants. At the Teen Center, they remain to watch and cheer basketball games. They also assiduously patrol the surrounding neighborhood when large groups of youth arrive and leave and when the adult staff get wind of incipient violence.

Spokane, Washington

Spokane's population of more than 180,000 includes many new residents with few skills for surviving in an urban area. Some are members of minority groups that have been disproportionally affected by poverty, including Native Americans and African-Americans, and others are recent immigrants from Southeast Asia and East India.

A "report card" on Spokane area youth sponsored by the Youth Commission and area businesses found that the city's deficits included high rates of teenage drug use, unemployment, illiteracy, and teen pregnancy. In January 1992, based on results of five monthly public neighborhood meetings convened after several extremely serious incidents of violent victimization of children, an ad hoc Security Task Force composed of residents and representatives from schools and city agencies identified the categories of issues that needed to be addressed to prevent future crimes involving children: police-community relations, neighborhood security improvements, security education, and block networking and organizing.

A comprehensive, multifaceted program is now working on these problems and issues in two neighborhoods, West Central and Nevada-Lidgerwood.

West Central Community Center

Spokane's West Central neighborhood is a multiethnic community that has experienced some of Spokane's worst problems associated with poverty, including crime. In the first 10 years of the West Central Community Development Association's existence, the staff concentrated on developing the West Central Community Center as a facility for implementing interventions to break the cycle of poverty in which many neighborhood families were enmeshed. WIC (Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children), Head Start, classes to teach parenting skills, and other community education programs and classes were made available in the center, as were some youth development activities. However, according to the center's original and current executive director, until rigorous outreach was conducted in the surrounding neighborhood—in large part through the efforts of COPS West and Family Focus—the programs had minimal participation among those most in need of them.

Today the West Central Community Center is a beehive of activity. During school hours, the center is a home away from home for developmentally delayed adults who are cared for by trained providers until their primary caretakers return from their jobs. It also provides a safe and productive environment for children and teens in the hours before and after school.

4-H activities take place in the center in the early morning, and then participants are taken to school in vans. The Girl Scout Council has a professional staff member who is organizing and leading troop activities in the center and introducing parents and neighborhood families to the benefits of Girl Scouting.

The Washington State University Family Focus Program

The Family Focus Program outreach component in West Central Spokane teaches family and life skills to parents who lack basic methods for managing their personal lives or their homes. Family Focus is administered by the Spokane County Cooperative Extension of Washington State University (WSU).

The Spokane Police Department

The exemplary COPS initiatives involving Spokane youth are natural products of a departmental approach that involves officers in community collaborations for:

- Identifying problems.
- Analyzing the specific facets of problems that have been identified (who is involved, when, how, and why).
- Taking logical steps and community action to resolve problems.
- Evaluating the outcomes that have been achieved.

Key to Spokane's community policing approach is the chief's strong encouragement of officer approaches that go well beyond those used for traditional law enforcement and crime prevention, particularly for addressing problems involving Spokane's children and teens.

As a result of the motivation provided by the chief and supervising officers, individual officers in Spokane have developed a range of approaches for creating safer and more creative environments for children and teens in the nonschool hours. These include COPS West, the Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers, and a Boy Scout Explorer preparatory leadership program.

COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) West is a ministation staffed by community volunteers (many of whom are Family Focus participants or graduates) a neighborhood resource officer assigned by the Spokane Police Department, and more recently representatives from a number of other public agencies, including the Office of the District Attorney and Adult and Juvenile Probation and Parole.

Both traditional and innovative neighborhood policing techniques are used by COPS West. Teams of neighbors are

trained in dispute resolution and respond to calls involving conflicts between community children and teens or other residents, if the police department's neighborhood resource officer is confident that the confrontation can be handled without violent responses. Adults patrol the streets before and after school to ensure that children are safe and that older teens are not harassing each other or younger children.

Together with WSU Family Focus staff and the West Central Community Development Association, COPS West has taken the lead in organizing events enjoyed by the whole neighborhood, such as the now annual Neighbor Days when a parade highlights the start of an entire day of celebration. Integral to the community events are the neighborhood children and teens, through their participation in youth groups formed at the Community Center.

COPS West and WSU Family Focus have achieved documented success in creating a safer community. According to the police department, the effort resulted in a 40-percent decrease in crime in the West Central Neighborhood between 1991 and 1994.

Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers is a core subgroup of one of Spokane's neighborhood COPS initiatives. Both girls and boys, most in their midteens, participate. The girls who belong to Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers are officially a part of Girl Scout Troop 437. The Girl Scouts were anxious to take on projects in the community to correct neighborhood conditions that had become visible problems. Realizing the changes that the West Central Community had achieved through their COPS effort, one of the Senior Girl Scouts decided to organize a similar effort in the Nevada-Lidgerwood area.

One of the first projects was to reclaim their neighborhood park. They documented and reported graffiti, trash, broken lights, and other unsanitary and unsafe conditions. They put on summer campouts in the park for neighborhood children, and the Spokane police and a special group of adult neighborhood COPS volunteers provided extra patrol.

The **Boy Scout Explorer Post** was started in 1987 as part of the police chief's plan to create a volunteer program in which officers carry out youth development and community development activities with the active cooperation of neighborhood volunteers. The chief realized that, when provided with productive opportunities, older teens can be a powerful community asset rather than a problem. He delegated the creation of an Explorer Post to a police officer who had prior professional experience in working with older teens and had been recognized for his previous volunteer contributions to the community.

The intent of the post was to involve adolescents who had little or no previous opportunity for community leadership—not by waiving the qualifications for Explorer Scouts—but by stimulating younger teens to meet the requirements for joining the post. A cornerstone of this approach is the L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Education, and Development) program for boys and girls in the seventh and eighth grades. It is under the supervision of the officer who directs the Explorer Post. L.E.A.D. students participate in an intensive program of training similar to that of Explorer Scouts but more appropriate for their stage of development.

Successful efforts in Spokane benefit from the city's history of forming coalitions to address shared problems, among them a citywide youth commission, coalitions of public agencies and private organizations, neighborhood-based teams of youth-serving organizations, public agencies concerned with youth, and neighborhood volunteers. This strong community support, together with a spectrum of youth-serving organizations and the innovative participation of the Spokane Police Department, have resulted in a range of programs for meeting the comprehensive needs of many children in the city.

What You Can Do to Provide Safe, Constructive Activities for At-Risk Youth

In their essentials, measures taken in Arlington, Bristol, and Spokane are similar. Leaders in each city gathered information needed to assess the status of their youth. They faced hard problems head on and came up with action plans to address multiple factors that were endangering kids' lives.

Rather than reinventing ways for preventing violence and promoting wholesome development, they figured out who in the community already had approaches most likely to be effective. This included the police, directors of nationally affiliated youth organizations, and other public youth-serving agencies—schools (administrators, counselors, and teachers), social services, health and treatment organizations, and juvenile justice practitioners including judges, district attorneys, and probation officers.

Your city may already have carried out some of the steps described in this report. However, because violence involv-

ing youth has multiple causes, cities that carry out multiple concerted actions are more likely than others to bring youth problems under sustained control. The following steps carried out in the case study sites are offered as a checklist to consider actions your city might take.

Police chiefs and other law enforcement executives can:

- Get to know the directors of youth-serving agencies and be willing to sit on their advisory boards and on community coalitions addressing youth issues.
- Encourage officers to volunteer at youth organizations in the community and publicly reward them for their efforts.
- Incorporate joint activities between police and youth-serving organizations into the day-to-day operation of the department.

Directors of youth organizations and agencies can:

- Introduce themselves and their organizations to the police chief and welcome a police presence on and around their premises.
- Invite police to put on prevention programs with the children and adolescents they serve and to participate in recreational activities for youth.
- Participate in city task forces that deal with youth issues, in neighborhood coalitions to advocate for safe activities for youth, and in community antidrug, anticrime efforts.
- Work with police and child protection agencies to identify and provide services to youth who may be perpetrators or victims of crime.
- Work with police and community leaders in offering their centers as places where troubled teens can perform community service.
- Advocate for youth among local officials and legislative bodies and teach young participants to be advocates.
- Work with other youth-serving organizations in joint ventures on a continuing basis.
- Get to know the educational and religious leaders in the community and find ways to have fruitful working relationships or to plan comprehensive solutions to common problems.

Community coalitions and collaborations can:

- Make sure they have a strong police, youth organization, and at-risk youth presence.
- Talk to police and others to determine the scope of delinquency and the range of adolescent experiences that contribute to it.
- Find out what services are currently available for at-risk kids.
- Assess the needs of youth for wholesome skill-building activities that they will enjoy after school.
- Find or advocate for places that can house afterschool programs where they are the most needed, operated by organizations that have demonstrated experience in providing them.

Local officials and other community leaders can:

- Find out from the organizations that work with kids what kids' greatest needs are.
- Find ways public agencies (such as youth-serving and public housing agencies) can collaborate to keep youth off the streets and in safe activities.
- Help launch or participate in coalitions dedicated to this goal.
- Wherever possible, promote a comprehensive approach to delinquency prevention that involves both police and youth-serving organizations and demonstrated experience in serving teens.

The full report provides more complete descriptions of these steps as taken by the organization leaders in the three case study cities. Their actions represent an arduous undertaking, and they willingly shared their experiences so that this report could be written. They are also prepared to provide advice and support to you. Their names and information for contacting them are furnished in the appendix. They will be glad to hear of your commitment to provide safe, productive places for our Nation's youth.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Alarmed by a precipitous increase in the rate of violent crimes involving children and teens over the past decade,[1] police, schools, youth-serving organizations, and other community groups are trying a variety of tactics to stem this dangerous trend. Not all efforts are effective, and no single approach has unqualified success. But a growing body of research suggests that some efforts by police in partnership with other community agencies are instrumental in creating safer places for youth. While researchers are trying to sort out particular causes and effects, all agree that the upwardly spiraling rates of violence involving children and teens has been checked and in many places has started to decline.

Yet the problem is far from solved. Adolescents are three times more likely to be victims of violence than adults.[2] Murders of juveniles were still 66 percent higher in 1995 than in 1985.[3] And communities are still searching for better ways to prevent violence and promote the sound development of our kids.

This research-based report has been written to help law enforcement administrators and officers realize and institute a strategy that has been found to help prevent violence—community-oriented policing services carried out in collaboration with youth-serving organizations. In a growing number of cities, police are coming to realize that youth organizations are not just for little kids and not just for youth who are by nature good kids.

With the help of police, in addition to serving the little Brownie Girl Scout selling cookies door to door, the Girl Scout program is providing opportunities for former gang members to improve skills for finding and keeping jobs. In addition to teaching animal care to elementary school students, 4–H staff are also conducting outreach to runaway teens whose main source of income is prostitution. While still providing afterschool activities in downtown centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, and the YMCA corporations and branches are creating satellites in public housing and other urban areas where kids have been exposed to day-to-day violence.

Popular police prevention approaches such as D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) and the McGruff "Take a Bite Out of Crime" campaign have helped pave the way for police to work hand in hand in a variety of ways with local chapters of national youth organizations. Community-oriented policing has created a new opportunity for partnerships with youth organizations who know how to help kids stay out of trouble and give them the boost they need to be successful. Together these partners are creating safer environments for children and teens—many of whom are at high risk for delinquency and violence. In the following sections, a variety of cooperative activities are described.

Descriptions are based on approaches recently studied as part of research jointly sponsored by the National Institute of Justice and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The research involved a LINC survey of 579 affiliates of 7 national youth-serving organizations: Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Incorporated, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., National Association of Police Athletic Leagues, National 4–H Council and USDA 4–H and Youth Development Service, and YMCA of the USA. As designed, about half the affiliates were located in big cities with high crime rates. The research also incorporated case studies that included onsite observations of approaches in three cities: Bristol, Connecticut; Arlington, Texas; and Spokane, Washington. A panel of experts selected approaches used in these cities from among those nominated as exemplary by survey respondents. The selected approaches incorporate elements that research tells us prevent delinquency and support wholesome development.

The Dimensions of Violence Involving Kids

National statistics show how pressing is the need for effective approaches that will prevent crimes by violent youth. Juvenile arrests for murder and manslaughter increased 60 percent in the 1980s and another 45 percent from 1990 to 1993.[4] In 1991, juveniles were responsible for about one out of five violent crimes including rape, robbery, and assault.[5] Although the rates of juvenile violence began to decline in 1994 and 1995, juveniles were responsible for a greater proportion of violent crime.[6]

The number of youth who are victims of violence has also increased. Between 1987 and 1992, the number of children aged 12 to 17 who were victims of violent crimes increased 23 percent,[7] and one out of eight children aged 12 to 15 were victims of violence in 1993.[8] In 1992, head injuries from firearms resulted in more deaths among teens and young adults than head injuries from automobile accidents and falls together.[9] Recently more teens have died from firearm injuries than all natural causes combined.[10] Public places have become extremely dangerous in communities where firearms are readily available and frequently fired. Front-page headlines of driveby shootings are graphic illustrations of the 72-percent increase from 1983 to 1992 in fatal traumatic brain injuries from firearms among young people aged 15–24.[11]

In addition, hidden violent offenses against children are being committed in the nonschool hours but in less visible settings. About 50 percent of rape victims are girls in their teens or younger. In 1992, about 17,000 preteen girls were raped—an estimated 16 percent of all rape victims that year.[12] Countless children have been damaged by abuse and neglect outside the school setting; more than 140,000 children were seriously damaged in 1990 alone.[13]

Although 1997 U.S. Department of Justice statistics[14] indicate that national efforts may have started to stem the violence affecting our youth, many children and teens realistically view the world as unsafe. They see violence as normal. Young girls who are sexually assaulted are advised by their friends to "get over it, it happens."[15] In a growing number of urban neighborhoods, boys expect to die young.

Kids Are Most at Risk for Violence and Serious Delinquency

Although children and teens around the country view their world as perilous, a growing body of research suggests that children are more or less vulnerable to violence and delinquency depending on their individual characteristics, their family situation, their adjustment to school, and their neighborhood and community.

Age is one of the most important characteristics that determines whether or not a child will become a victim of violence or engage in serious delinquency. Children are most at risk of becoming victims of violence at two stages—during early infancy and during the adolescent years.[16] While babies are most likely to be victims of family members and others in their household, adolescents are exposed to increasing dangers from strangers and, more substantially, from acquaintances. In 1994, adolescents aged 12 to 17 were three times more likely than adults to be victims of violent crimes.[17] While a few children commit serious violent offenses in the early school-age years, the onset of violence usually does not occur until the onset of puberty.[18]

In addition to the age of a child, gender plays an important part in determining vulnerability to violence. Until early adolescence, boys and girls are equally likely to become victims of the most serious form of violence—homicide. Thereafter boys are most at risk.[19] However, at the age when boys become increasingly at risk of violent deaths, girls become most vulnerable to rape and other sexual violence.[20]

Earlier studies of delinquency suggested that overall, compared to boys, girls are less likely to commit crimes, and those who are delinquent are more likely to commit secretive offenses like theft rather than aggressive or violent crimes like purse snatching or robbery.[21] However, more recent studies have shown that in early adolescence, from ages 10 to 14, serious violent acts are committed almost as frequently by girls as by boys, and in some cities young teen girls commit more violent crimes than boys.[22] In the later teen years, girls are less likely than boys to act violently.[23]

Family situations are also major determinants of whether a child will become a victim of violence or an offender. From birth to adolescence, the person most likely to assault a child is a member of his or her own family.[24] Although child abuse has been shown to be a significant cause of serious delinquency and results in an intergenerational cycle of violence, recent studies have demonstrated that severe parental neglect is just as likely to lead to serious delinquency as physical assault.[25] Even in the vast majority of homes where parents are not abusive or criminally neglectful, children are more likely to become seriously delinquent if their mothers, fathers, or caregivers lack good parenting skills or the ability to provide ongoing supervision.

Schools too play a major role in increasing or decreasing the probability that a child will become seriously delinquent or a victim of violence. Several studies have shown that children's inability to achieve in school and their lack of attachment to school are powerful predictors of serious delinquency. Since some schools have 10 times more violence than others,[26] the particular school a child attends makes a significant difference in the child's exposure to violence. Children who are frequently exposed to violence at home, at school, and perhaps most important, unchecked violence among neighborhood children their own age are most likely to become persistently delinquent and increasingly violent.[27]

Just as violence (particularly violence involving children and teens) differs from school to school, it varies from city to city and from neighborhood to neighborhood. Research on urban crime[28] has confirmed the anecdotal information gathered by experienced law enforcement officers about neighborhoods most likely to erupt in youth violence. The neighborhoods are for the most part economically impoverished, and their residents are likely to be members of minority groups or recent immigrants. An estimated 46 million people, 18 percent of the population, live in poverty. Close to 59 percent of these are working families with children who by definition cannot afford to purchase the basic necessities of life—food, clothing, and adequate shelter[29]—much less resources to privately provide supervised neighborhood activities for children. Moreover, studies in Chicago neighborhoods suggest that residents in high-crime areas do not have the social skills or social organization needed to demand, as a community, that children and teens (and adults) follow accepted norms of behavior in public.[30]

Kids Are Most Vulnerable to Crime During the Nonschool Hours

Growing numbers of teens and younger children are spending more and more hours out of school in places that are unsupervised and unsafe. Even children and teens who are rarely absent are in school for a limited amount of time because school days are short and schools are not in session during vacations, holidays, and weekends. Children aged 9 to 14 commonly spend about 60 percent of their waking time outside school.[31] Violent crimes by juveniles are typically committed in the afterschool hours between 2:30 in the afternoon and 8:30 at night.[32]

When children reach puberty, as a normal and necessary part of their development they seek out group activities that challenge them to take risks. However, research suggests that adolescents who affiliate with a delinquent group enter a vicious cycle. They commit more delinquent acts and begin to believe that these acts are normal. As they seek out other adolescents with similar beliefs, the number of offenses they commit goes up.[33]

While most adolescents seek to belong to a group, relatively few identify their group of friends as a gang. Most of those who say they belong to a gang generally associate with gang members for a limited number of years. However, teens who are in gangs commit more property and drug crimes than other children their age. Research in one city revealed that although they constituted less than one-third of adolescents, gang members committed more than two-thirds of violent crimes by juveniles.[34] Gang-related crimes too are more likely to take place in the afterschool hours than at any other time of day or night.[35]

When asked about what they wanted during the nonschool hours, many children and teens wistfully mentioned places, spaces, and activities that others take for granted: " . . . safe parks and recreation centers . . . libraries with the latest books, videos, and records . . . chances to go camping and participate in sports . . . long talks with trusting and trustworthy adults who know a lot about the world . . . and opportunities to learn new skills."[36] Many of these requests have long been met by traditional youth-serving organizations. Coincidentally, very limited research on these types of approaches has serendipitously found that they reduce juvenile delinquency. However, since they were not designed to prevent delinquency, by and large their crime reduction value has not been understood.

The Most Popular Approaches for Dealing With Juvenile Violence Haven't Worked

When asked how they would curb violence involving youth, most people have two solutions: (1) get tough and lock up the troublemakers and (2) provide education and recreation. In a Yankelovich poll, 79 percent of adult Americans said that the best way to reduce teen violence was to provide tougher criminal penalties for juvenile offenders.[37] Currently the most appealing methods for dealing with troublesome children involve physical constraints. Despite attempts to "deinstitutionalize" children, in 1993 this country locked up more than 53,000 children in State facilities and many more in long-term local facilities.[38] We are incarcerating so many children that 62 percent of those living in long-term juvenile facilities in 1991 were housed in units operating above their designed capacity,[39] and in 1995 this increased to more than 70 percent.[40]

Even so-called alternatives to incarceration actually depend on physically constraining adolescents. Congress has mandated greater use of boot camps to incarcerate young offenders and rapidly teach them self-discipline through military drills, even though these approaches appear to have little or no effect on delinquency unless combined with community-based approaches.[41] Recently, curfews for banning young people from city streets, without regard to where they will go and what they will do, are gaining popularity. Between

1990 and 1994, 33 cities had longstanding ordinances, and 26 major cities passed new laws restricting where minors can be after 11 p.m. (and some after 10 p.m.).[42] Little at present is known about their effectiveness; however, expectations for reducing violence should not be high since far fewer violent crimes are committed by children and teens after 10 p.m. than in the hours immediately after school.[43]

As violence involving children has escalated, the failure of current legal approaches for controlling this violence has become evident. In growing numbers, children are unsupervised, neglected, abused, and delinquent. They cannot simply be removed from their parents and assigned to other adults or institutions. Children who are repeatedly removed from their homes and made wards of the state have been found to have a high probability of being delinquent in later years.[44] The most persistent and violent predatory offenders who terrorize their neighborhoods are frequently "state-raised" children who were previously placed in juvenile institutions.[45]

An equally simple but more compassionate popular response to stopping youth violence is to spend more funds on teaching youth to be less violent and on providing safe places for them to play. About 73 percent of the people queried in the Yankelovich poll mentioned earlier were in favor of more government spending on educational and recreational facilities for teenagers.[46] In response, numerous Federal, State, and local agencies are funding prevention initiatives. PAVNET (the World Wide Web site of a consortium of Federal agencies including the Department of Justice) provides information about 540 prevention programs, many of them receiving Federal funds.[47] Typically, each agency provides funds for education limited to one facet of one specific type of problem. For example, in its 1995 directory and resource guide, the Office of National Drug Control Policy listed 50 Federal funding programs mandated to address different aspects of drug abuse. The programs are administered by 10 different departments and numerous agencies within each department, yet a substantial body of research indicates that most single-problem, single-strategy approaches are not effective for reducing delinquency, much less violence.[48]

While a growing body of research indicates that some forms of prevention can be effective, the same studies also suggest that many well-intentioned prevention programs do not have a discernable impact on reducing juvenile violence or other forms of delinquency, and some may actually increase delinquency and violence. Types of programs least likely to be successful in prevention include those that simply provide a supervised afterschool setting (adolescents most at risk for delinquency won't go or may take over the place if they do), sports, peer mediation, approaches that make gangs more cohesive, instructional approaches that depend on providing information about the risks or wickedness of delinquency, and—counter to popular thought—approaches designed simply to improve children's self-esteem.[49]

Approaches that criminologists have found to be most promising for preventing violence and delinquency are relatively long-term, continuous, comprehensive approaches that involve adults as tutors and mentors who teach children and teens cognitive and social skills and provide them an opportunity to cooperatively practice these skills.[50] These approaches are virtually synonymous with the approaches implemented by many national youth-serving organizations, including those described in this report.

Effective Prevention Approaches Are Integral to National Youth Organizations

While criminologists have been studying the types of programs that can prevent violence and delinquency, researchers in child and adolescent development have been assessing approaches that can best help youth achieve their full potential. The results have been very much the same.

A review of several seminal works in the field of adolescent development has classified six areas in which adolescents need support and opportunities in the community setting for building competencies: health/physical, personal/social, creative/cognitive, vocational, and areas involving communal ethics and citizen participation.[51] More specifically, adolescents need opportunities to build and practice basic life skills known to be integral to healthy adolescent development: "problem-solving skills, planning and decisionmaking skills, cognitive strategies for resisting peer and media influences, skills for increasing self-monitoring and self-regulation, and coping strategies to deal with everyday stresses."[52]

Like criminologists, experts in youth development recognize that children and teens are shaped in multiple environments. The separate contexts that are instrumental in determining immediate behavior and the long-term future of children and adolescents—"families, schools, peers, the media, the workplace, and communities—have distinct functions, and one cannot replace the other."[53] However, unlike many criminologists, researchers in youth development recognize that in the United States afterschool programs provided by community-

based youth organizations have been a cornerstone of this network for more than a hundred years.

Beginning in the last half of the 19th century, organizations created to serve children in rural and urban settings included 4–H Clubs established by the County Extension Departments of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Boys Clubs (now called Boys and Girls Clubs), Girls Clubs (now named Girls Incorporated), and settlement houses. With the advent of urbanization and change, organizations such as the YMCA were established and dedicated to preserving mainstream religious values, first among young adults and later among younger children.

As suburban areas developed in the early 1900s, other youth-development organizations such as Boys Scouts of America and Girls Scouts of the U.S.A. were imported from England. Troops provided opportunities for hands-on learning experiences to children who, unlike rural youth, had little or no involvement in contributing to their families' livelihood and, unlike children in large urban settings, had limited access to the live arts, museums, or the rich cultural experience of city streets.

Typically, the approaches taken by national youth organizations possess the essential characteristics of programs that have been found to prevent delinquency: (1) They are comprehensive, attempting to ameliorate more than a single factor associated with delinquency and simultaneously focusing on multiple problem behaviors; (2) they are appropriate for children of specific ages and developmental stages; and (3) they continue over the long term, certainly more than a few months, and often several years.[54] The approaches bolster the "protective" factors that allow adolescents to make the perilous transition from childhood to adulthood without becoming deeply enmeshed in violence and other forms of delinquency.

As suggested above, protective factors that prevent children from becoming delinquent include their individual competence, adults who provide support and safety, productive experiences in school, and—especially in early adolescence—groups of friends who stay out of trouble.[55] Although the objectives of traditional youth organizations are typically stated in terms of positive development rather than prevention of negative outcomes, promoting these protective factors is integral to the mission of these organizations.

Many of the activities carried out in youth organizations have been carefully designed by experienced professional staff to promote problem-solving skills, intellectual abilities, communication skills, and self-efficacy—attributes now known to help prevent delinquency.[56] By providing opportunities for parents or other caring adults to play and work productively together, whether at YMCA aquatics events, Police Athletic League ball games, Girl Scout and Boy Scout camping trips, or youth club community projects, these organizations can help forge closer relationships between children and adult family members. By creating supervised settings in which children and teens can meet relatively good kids their own age and select activities they like and learn from, youth organizations also help children form friendships with nondelinquent peers.

The functions of youth organizations go well beyond protecting children and teens from imminent delinquency. According to professionals most familiar with childhood and adolescent development, community-based youth organizations constitute a cornerstone of the institutions necessary for people to reach their full potential. "Afterschool activities that are viewed as voluntary and enjoyable provide a developmental transition between childhood play and disciplined activities of adulthood"[57] needed by all adolescents—especially those who lack creative play and supportive adults at home or in school.

In today's world, where many single parents have low incomes and less time to spend with their children and where many schools are literally and figuratively falling apart, activities in the community—including those of youth-serving organizations—achieve increasing importance. Youth organizations are seen as places in the community that can most readily provide necessary resources children and teens fail to find elsewhere.[58] This is especially important in neighborhoods where all essential resources for children and teens are scarce and crime rates are high.

Youth Organizations Are Trying to Reach Youth Most at Risk for Violence

Although youth organizations have played a recognized role in raising the Nation's children, a seminal study by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development found that communities least likely to have the benefit of youth organizations' afterschool programs are those in which parents and schools have the fewest resources to devote to children and teens.[59] In many of these communities, national youth organizations are striving to pull together the fundamental resources needed to implement afterschool programs. They are simultaneously struggling to recruit children and adolescents

already involved in crime and violence and to minimize the costs of crime at their own program sites.

Recognizing the formidable problems that children and teens in many communities face at home and on the streets, youth organizations are developing new approaches to help young participants overcome serious obstacles to their well-being and to reach their full potential. Youth organizations are acutely aware of what they need to do to recruit participants at the age when they are most vulnerable to violence—adolescence—from economically depressed neighborhoods with high crime rates and with residents who cannot provide safety for their kids or collectively solve neighborhood problems.

Youth-serving organizations know that for this at-risk population they need to duplicate the elements that have for generations appealed to their adolescent participants:

- An **environment** in which kids are valued and adolescents are considered to be resources rather than problems for their community. The environment includes clear rules for behavior and membership, accompanied by flexibility in responding to the real crises faced by many teens. It also includes adults who are attuned to the interests, aspirations, and values of adolescents, treat them as adults, yet recognize that—like all children—they still need protection.

- **Activities** that present teens with challenges and experiences in planning, preparing for, and publicly presenting projects they and their communities value. Presented with enough activities to allow choice, teens are encouraged to take on activities that will develop their capabilities through hands-on experience and practice. Prodded, nagged, teased, and loved, teens are persuaded to meet the challenges the activities present.

- Ongoing **outreach** to teens and adults in the community, with messages that are understandable. Outreach activities involve other neighborhood institutions and people who are integral to the day-to-day lives of the teens.[6]

At the same time, national organizations and their local affiliates know that to create these environments, to provide these activities, and to conduct successful outreach in neighborhoods where youth are at highest risk for violence, they must deal with the pressing need to deal with crime that touches participants and staff. Police in some communities are playing a major role in addressing this issue.

Endnotes

1. Although analysis of several different sets of national data shows an increase in juvenile arrests for violent crime in the period from 1985 to 1993, calculations of the levels of increase vary depending on the source of data and the types of offenses included in the category of violent crime. Two data sets are commonly used to estimate numbers of crimes committed by juveniles. One is collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics about victimizations of persons 12 years and older; these data are collected in a survey of a national probability sample of U.S. households (the National Crime Victimization Survey). The other set of data is collected by the FBI and includes Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data provided by police departments and other law enforcement agencies; the UCR data include crime incidents reported to the police and details about arrestees, such as their age; supplementary data are collected about homicides.

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Chapter 2
Crime and Youth Organizations

"In January, at about 7 p.m., gunfire started going off behind the building, scaring all the kids who were inside and outside. Most of the kids ran home after the first shots were fired. The shots continued for about 45 minutes to an hour. When the police finally arrived, they arrested three teenagers who live about 150 feet from the building. They were shooting at the apartments right above the [youth organization]. They had all been drinking." *LINC Survey Respondent*

This incident is an all too common occurrence for millions of children and teenagers living in inner-city neighborhoods, and the time—7 p.m.—is in the time range when dangerous events involving young people are most likely to occur. When they are out of school and out of their homes, young people are most at risk for committing offenses and most vulnerable to becoming victims of crime themselves.

Today major youth-serving organizations are reaching millions of children and teenagers nationwide, with the Girl Scouts alone reporting 2.5 million members. They are targeting this time period—and increasingly the most at-risk youth—for recruitment into safe, wholesome, enjoyable, and age-appropriate activities. The organizations studied in the survey sponsored by NIJ and the Carnegie Corporation of New York (Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Incorporated, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., National Association of Police Athletic Leagues, National 4–H Council and USDA 4–H and Youth Development Service, and YMCA of the USA) are offering safe havens and alternatives to risky, delinquent behavior for youth in the most "dangerous" hours of the day for them—from the time school is dismissed until the early evening hours.

Our survey found that during the school year 3 p.m. is the most common time for youth organizations to begin activities, and 9 p.m. is the most common time for activities to end.

Youth-Serving Organizations Are Reaching Kids in Economically Depressed Urban Areas

Our conversations with key staff of the national organizations collaborating in this study indicated that despite the findings of a seminal Carnegie Corporation study[1] showing youth organizations to be least likely to serve those most in need of such programs (young people in neighborhoods most affected by poverty), these organizations were committed to providing programs for more children and teens in the most impoverished neighborhoods.

Also contrary to the assumption that national youth organizations focus almost exclusively on relatively well-to-do communities, among all responding organizations in our study sample of 579,[2] under half were located in neighborhoods that could be characterized as prosperous (6 percent) or middle-class (40 percent). Most were in communities that were working class (37 percent) or poor (16 percent). Many neighborhoods were experiencing some structural decay (26 percent) or extensive structural decay (12 percent). Although very few organizations were located in areas that were considered to be unsafe for walking during daylight hours (8 percent), slightly over half were in neighborhoods thought to be unsafe after dark.

Local affiliates of Boys Clubs (now named Boys and Girls Clubs) and Girls Clubs (now named Girls Incorporated) have long been providing programs for school-age youth in the least affluent sections of cities. More recently, with the assistance of funding from Federal agencies, both organizations have made successful strides in establishing centers and branches in public housing and on the grounds of schools in inner city and other economically depressed areas. In addition to the solid comprehensive core programs for guiding children productively into and through adolescence, both organizations have developed age- and culture-appropriate (and, at Girls Incorporated, gender-appropriate) programs for preventing a spectrum of harmful behavior, including substance abuse and early initiation of sexual activity. Key to the programs' success is the incorporation of activities that children and teens not only learn from but greatly enjoy.[3]

Police Athletic Leagues (PALs) and the "Ys" (YMCA corporations and branches) too have long served urban youth. Under the supervision of off-duty police officers, PALs have organized baseball leagues for city boys for many years, and "Y" aquatics programs have become relatively ubiquitous. In recent years, both of these organizations have reoriented their primary mission toward providing more comprehensive services to people in inner cities.

While baseball and aquatics programs remain fundamental activities that bring youth into PALs and Ys, affiliates now include programs to meet other needs such as tutoring to enhance academic and employment skills. In some cities PALs have combined efforts with other youth organizations to provide more comprehensive services; for example, in Washington, D.C., PAL has organized boys and girls clubs to sponsor programs staffed by officers from the Metropolitan D.C. Police Department. Around the country YMCA affiliates have expanded their mission so extensively that administrators often repeat a new informal organizational motto: "We are still the YMCA, but "A" [for "Association"] is the only letter that still tells what we are." As with Girls Incorporated and Boys and Girls Clubs, local Y branches are also providing more activities in inner city locations away from their traditional buildings.

Inner-city areas do not have many afterschool programs, as the Carnegie Corporation study made abundantly clear. So it is not surprising that when a national organization charters an affiliate to provide youth activities in an impoverished area, school-age children come in droves. On average almost three times as many participants were being served by each responding affiliate in a poor city neighborhood as in prosperous neighborhood.

Youth Organizations Are Reaching Kids Already Involved in Crime as Victims or Offenders

In response to the growing involvement in crime and substance abuse of "latch-key" children and undersupervised teens, all seven national youth organizations collaborating in our study are implementing programs designed to help youth avoid "risky" behavior as well as more traditional programs providing opportunities for constructive contributions. Realizing that children and teens in inner-city areas are most likely to engage in harmful activities and least likely to be provided with activities essential for their wholesome development, all collaborating organizations are attempting to bolster the ability of their affiliates and charter members to serve communities where the need is most pressing.

The LINC national survey of youth-serving organizations provided evidence that actions are being taken to provide more programs for children and youth in types of neighborhoods that are commonly underserved. By design, about half of our survey sample of 579 were nationally affiliated youth organizations in large cities with relatively high rates of crimes (about 300), with the remainder in small cities and towns (about 150) or in large cities with relatively low crime rates (about 150). Contrary to the myth that some of the national youth-serving organizations confine their services to relatively crime-free towns, all seven of the national organizations collaborating in our study were providing programs for children and teens in large cities with high crime rates that were randomly selected for the LINC survey.

Moreover, almost three-fourths (72 percent) of the reporting organizations were involving participants during the developmental stages when young people are most likely to become involved in delinquent acts—early adolescence through the teen years.

Based on the reported problems involving young participants, organizations were opening their doors to and actively recruiting children and teens at risk for delinquency or violence. Twenty percent of responding organizations reported having taken action in the past year on behalf of a participant who had been abused or neglected. Over 20 percent of responding organizations reported that a participant had committed an offense at their program sites during the past year. Although a relatively small proportion (2 percent) reported the need to deal with a participant who had brought a gun, over 7 percent reported having to take action when a participant brought another type of weapon.

Girl Scout and Boy Scout organizations, too, have implemented a number of promising initiatives for actively involving girls and boys in urban neighborhoods where children and teens lack constructive opportunities in the nonschool hours. Both scouting agencies have supplemented their traditional activities with programs to help participants recognize consequences and successfully deal with the harsh realities faced by many of our youth, such as violence and substance abuse. Led by volunteer police officers, Boy Scout Explorer posts in neighborhoods where poverty is rampant and violence is epidemic are successfully recruiting adolescents to work as law enforcement paraprofessionals. Girl

Scout Councils are reaching out to girls in extreme need of adult support and opportunities for productive activities in the nonschool hours—including daughters of women in prison.

Although 4–H and the USDA 4–H and Youth Development Service may still be best known for their activities involving youth in the farmlands of the United States, their services are reaching deep into the lives of children and teens in urban America. Rather than simply extending traditional agrarian activities to city locations, programs are based on research and are carefully designed to promote problem-solving skills, intellectual abilities, communication skills, and self-efficacy—attributes known to help prevent delinquency.[4] In some urban areas hardest hit by epidemics of substance abuse and crime, 4–H and Youth Development staff are among the front line organizations implementing programs for children and teens with the highest probability of violent incidents and deaths; for example, in Washington, D.C., outreach for teen prostitutes is provided from a van that is dispatched on Friday and Saturday nights to downtown locations.[5]

The More Vulnerable the Kids They Serve, the More Crime the Youth Organizations Experience

Given the high rates of crime in cities and neighborhoods in which affiliates of collaborating youth organizations are providing services, as well as the at-risk status of young participants, it is not surprising that crime had occurred at many program locations during the previous year. Among organizations included in the LINC study, more than half (51 percent) reported that an offense occurred at or immediately outside the primary program site during the program year beginning in the fall of 1993. Vandalism was the most common type of incident and was reported by approximately 40 percent of the organizations.

Theft of organizational, staff, or participant property was the second most common form of offense and was reported by 38 percent of organizations. Incidents involving violence in the past year were reported by slightly over 20 percent of organizations. Felonious assaults on staff or participants were somewhat less common.

In general, the less economically prosperous an area served by a large city youth organization, the more likely the organization was to have experienced crime—especially violent crime. Crime was a significantly greater problem at program locations in communities and neighborhoods where needs for youth services are most pressing. Among organizations located in large cities with relatively high rates of crime, 61 percent reported at least one crime at the primary program site in the past year, and 45 percent reported at least one incident of vandalism. Significantly more organizations in large cities reported an incident involving violence or threats of assaults; violent (or latently violent) incidents were reported by 26 percent of organizations in large cities[6] and 16 percent of organizations in small cities and towns.

Within large cities, crime took a greater toll on youth organizations in relatively poor, minority neighborhoods experiencing many forms of urban blight. Compared to large-city organizations located in all-white areas, those serving minority neighborhoods were significantly more likely to experience vandalism (54 percent compared to 29 percent) and property crime (64 percent compared to 35 percent); they were almost four times more likely to be affected by violent crime (38 percent compared to 10 percent).

Overlying these findings is an additional significant factor the survey analysis uncovered. The relatively high number of offenses experienced by organizations serving economically disadvantaged big-city neighborhoods appears in large part to be a factor of the relatively numerous school-age children they are serving and the prolonged time periods in which programs are operating. Responding organizations in poorer neighborhoods were serving significantly more participants and were operating more hours each year than organizations in more affluent neighborhoods. In fact, our study found that the level of crime experienced by the organizations was more strongly associated with the number of hours they operated and the number of children they served than with the economic level of the neighborhood or the presence of minority groups in the neighborhood. The annual hours of operation and number of children served by the organization together accounted for approximately 13 percent of the variation in the number of offenses reported by the responding organizations.

However, even after controlling for the number of children served and hours of operation, several aspects of program setting and participants' characteristics appeared to be significantly associated with the amount of crime affecting the youth-serving establishments. As could be expected from a large body of past findings, age and gender of participants were significant factors associated with the overall level of crime. Organizations serving more boys than girls reported higher levels of crime, as did organizations serving children of a mix of ages including adolescents (compared to those

serving exclusively younger children or just teens). Program location was found to be associated with a small but significant variation in the number of offenses reported—organizations located in less affluent areas in youth club settings had higher rates of crime, independent of the number and characteristics of youth served. Together number and characteristics of participants, number of hours in operation, and setting accounted for more than 20 percent of the variation in the number of offenses.

Gender of participants and the relative economic level of the neighborhood were the factors found to have the strongest correlation with the number of incidents involving violence that reportedly took place. After controlling for the number of hours in the program setting, which explained a significant but small variation in violence, gender and socioeconomic level accounted for additional variation in the level of violence. Together these three factors accounted for only a relatively small amount of variation between organizations. In fact, there was little variation to be explained because, in general, youth-serving organizations appeared to be sanctuaries from violence—and for staff and adult volunteers, sanctuaries from all types of victimization.

Most Offenders Are Kids

Independent of where they were located and whom they were serving, organizations affected by crime during the past program year preponderantly reported that offenders committing these crimes were children or teens rather than adults. Approximately 32 percent of organizations affected by crime reported that offenses had been committed by an adult, and about 66 percent reported that offenses had been committed by a child or teen.

Adult offenders were significantly more likely to victimize organizations located in relatively poor areas than ones in more prosperous neighborhoods; among those affected by crime, 36 percent of organizations in poverty areas and 41 percent in working class areas reported being victims of an adult offender compared to about 22 percent in middle-class and 1 percent in affluent neighborhoods. Adult strangers were more likely to commit offenses in or immediately outside the program locations than adults related to participants or well known to staff or than adults who were known by sight to the staff. About three-fourths (76 percent) of organizations affected by adult offenders reported that the offenders were strangers, compared to about one-third who reported being victims of well-known adults (32 percent) or recognizable adults (31 percent).

More Offenses Are Committed by Nonparticipants Than Participants

In general, among organizations reporting offenses by juveniles, nonparticipants were more likely to be the offenders than participants; 42.3 percent reported that offenses had been committed by nonparticipants, 21.4 percent by participants, and 36.3 percent by both members and nonmembers. The balance of young insiders or outsiders committing offenses did not differ significantly across neighborhoods with different economic levels. However, significant variations in the membership status of youthful offenders were found between organizations in different settings and between organizations serving youth with different characteristics.

Not surprisingly, organizations exclusively serving young children were most likely to report that juvenile offenses affecting their organization were committed just by outside youth; 67 percent said that nonparticipants were responsible for all juvenile offenses, whereas only 32 percent of organizations serving adolescents reported that nonparticipants were solely responsible for offenses. Among organizations serving more boys than girls, just 22 percent blamed outside youth alone for crimes affecting the organization.

Crime Takes a Heavy Toll on Organizational Resources

Administrators of national youth organizations point out that crime is a serious barrier to providing programs for children and teens in inner-city neighborhoods and in other areas with high rates of poverty and violence. According to these experienced directors, not only is crime costly in terms of organizational and staff property lost or stolen, but parents and guardians need to know that their children are safe—otherwise they don't want them to participate. The children and teens themselves are anxious to find afterschool locations where they are not in danger.

Yet unlike organizations that expel troublemakers to prevent crime, in collaborating youth organizations administrators note that young participants, especially adolescents, are more likely to participate voluntarily if program sites both literally and figuratively have an open-door policy. Organizations that are highly selective may eliminate some troublemakers, but they also eliminate youth most in need of delinquency prevention and youth development activities. By being selective they can earn a reputation among neighborhood youth for being unfriendly or, worse, for being elitist and therefore justifiable targets for vandalism and other hostile acts.

Findings about the relative personal safety of program directors (under 10 percent reported personally being victims of a crime in the program setting) are not likely to dampen their concern about the effects of crime on their organizations. Among the organizations reporting at least one violent incident or property crime in the 1993–1994 program year, more than 75 percent indicated that the organization suffered in a definable manner as a consequence. Economic consequences were sustained by 57 percent of organizations; for example, 43 percent of organizations reporting any crime had more than $100 worth of property purposely destroyed.

The second type of consequence most likely to result was the burden on staff who had to deal with incidents involving offenses committed by and against their participants. Close to half (48 percent) of organizations reporting crime also reported that staff were involved in activities directly related to dealing with crime incidents. Staff were just as likely to be reacting to incidents in which young participants had been victimized outside the program environment as to crimes that had taken place at the program site. For example, staff in organizations experiencing crime were just as likely to be taking action on behalf of children abused or neglected at home as they were to be actively engaged in dealing with participants who were abusing other members at the program site.

For about one-third of the organizations (33 percent), crime also had discernible negative consequences for program operations and activities. Fifteen percent had started to limit the hours the program operated to times when they thought participants and adults could be most safe when traveling to and from the program location. About an equal percentage had to curtail some activities because equipment or other necessary materials had been maliciously destroyed. Fear of crime made it difficult to recruit staff and participants for 12 percent of the responding organizations.

Most Steps Taken to Prevent Crime Haven't Worked

Whether or not they reported crimes during the 1993–1994 program year, practically all organizations responding to our survey had instituted at least one approach that they hoped would create a safer environment for their school-age participants.

The most widely used approaches simply involved using locks on doors, gates, cabinets, and closets to prevent unauthorized access to program areas (reported by 60 percent of organizations) and organizational equipment (reported by 67 percent). These were also among the crime prevention approaches most recommended by the responding program directors. Preventing access to organizational equipment was found to be associated with lower rates of car or van theft. However, in our analysis, locking doors to program areas was not found to be significantly related to lower rates of any type of crime; moreover, unless doors can be locked to prevent entrance but not exit from the program area, this measure presents a fire hazard.

Another widespread and highly recommended approach involved requiring a responsible adult to accompany participants when they left the program site. The findings of the study support this recommendation, since this was the only measure that was found by itself to be significantly correlated with lower overall rates of crime.[7]

Approaches that were gaining in popularity involved conducting background and criminal record checks on staff and volunteers; from 1993 to 1994, 10 percent of all responding organizations had instituted checks on volunteers and 6 percent had checked on staff. This measure was recommended by more than 80 percent of program directors; however, fewer than half of responding organizations were conducting these checks at the time of our survey.

Measures that were used by the fewest organizations and recommended by the fewest program directors involved conspicuous distrust of youth; in particular these were practices for denying participation to youth who were most likely to be delinquent (implemented by 4 percent of organizations and recommended by under 10 percent of program directors) and installing metal detectors (implemented by under 1 percent of organizations and recommended by 8 percent of program directors).

Other approaches that were recommended by many program directors but used by fewer than half of organizations included programs to help youth avoid becoming victims of crime, programs to prevent participants from becoming offenders, approaches that actively involve youth in crime prevention activities, and collaborative efforts with other organizations to prevent crime.

While these approaches may be effective in preventing crime in other settings, they may be more a reaction to high levels of crime than effective ways to prevent crime. The survey results showed that the more crime an organization experienced, the more preventive measures it adopted.

Police Responsiveness Is a Significant Factor in the Level of Crime

The study did, however, find one factor that appeared to be strongly associated with less crime. Police responsiveness to organizational requests was strongly and significantly related to lower levels of overall crime experienced by the reporting organizations.[8] The next chapter describes ways police responded to the needs of the organizations.

Endnotes

1. Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. 1992. *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

2. Six hundred organizations responded to the LINC survey; 21 were eliminated from the study because of incomplete or otherwise flawed data in the returned questionnaires.

3. See for example, Chaiken, Marcia. 1993. *The Girls Incorporated Teens for Teens Project: How It Works*. New York, N.Y.: Girls Incorporated.

4. Bogenschnieder, Karen, Stephen Small, and David Riley, undated (received at LINC 1992). *An Ecological Risk-Focused Approach for Addressing Youth-At-Risk Issues*. Chevy Chase, Maryland: National 4–H Center.

5. Cooperative Extension Service for the District of Columbia. 1995. private communication in response to snowball survey conducted by LINC under subcontract to the Institute for Law and Justice for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Grant 95–JN–X–0010.

6. The percentage of organizations in large cities reporting violent incidents was the same regardless of the crime rates.

7. Once other factors (including the number of children served each year) were held constant, this relationship was no longer significant.

8. Police responsiveness was a subjective measure ranked by responding program directors who had called the police department for any reason. Despite concern that the measure might be capturing dissatisfaction with police among victims of crime, the study found no significant association between respondents' personal experience with crime and their ranking of police responsiveness.

Chapter 3
Partnerships With Police

LINC survey responses from directors of youth organizations indicated that the police played an important part in the success of these organizations' efforts to provide safe havens and to provide alternatives to dangerous activities and delinquency, and youth organizations for the most part are prepared to reach out to their police. Like police in the communities described in the three case studies below, police in many cities in which survey respondents were located worked hand in hand with youth organizations in a number of ways.

Two out of three of the organizations responding to the survey had called police at least once during the 1993–1994 program year. Among organizations experiencing an incident involving violence, theft, or other property offense, 18 percent called to report a crime in progress, 20 percent to report a crime involving a participant, and 37 percent to report another type of crime that had already occurred at the program location.

Many organizations—28 percent of those that said they had experienced at least one offense—did not report these crimes to the police, primarily because they did not consider them to be crimes. Among the organizations that did report crimes, close to half said they only reported some incidents, about a quarter reported most incidents, and the rest said they reported all incidents. Eight out of 10 of the organizations said the departments were "very responsive" to the calls. Most of the rest termed the police "moderately responsive," and only 1 percent said police were "unresponsive."

Significantly, organizations asking for help from a police crime *prevention* unit reported more success in obtaining a response than those requesting the attention of a patrol unit. However, calls for help because of a crime in progress or other crime-related matters generally received a good response. In addition, organizations that reported police were very responsive were more likely to have low rates of crime than those who reported that police were moderately responsive or not responsive. These last two groups reported more than twice the number of offenses at their program sites than those reporting that their police were very responsive.

More Organizations Ask for Proactive Than Reactive Policing

Contacts with the police were more likely to be initiated by the youth-serving organizations to *prevent* crime than to *report* crime. In fact only one in four of all the organizations that called police during 1993–1994 called to report a crime. About a third called to report another type of emergency. Many more called to ask the department for help in preventing violence and other crimes involving participants, as shown below by the survey responses:

- A substantial proportion (nearly 72 percent) wanted an officer to give a one-time talk to youth participants about drugs, crime, child abuse, or other crime-related topic.
- About 55 percent wanted pamphlets or other information about crime prevention.
- A similar proportion (51 percent) asked the department to provide a drug prevention, crime prevention, or other program the police had developed for youth.
- About 50 percent wanted to arrange a field visit to the police (or sheriff's) department.
- A substantial proportion (nearly 21 percent) called to report suspicious people in the area who might be about to commit a crime.
- About 24 percent requested police or sheriff's surveillance when participants were arriving at or leaving the program location.
- A smaller proportion (about 16 percent) asked for a specially trained youth officer to be assigned to work regularly with youth.

As can be seen from these findings, many of the organizations (half) asked for more than one of the types of prevention approaches specified above.

As part of our survey, we asked respondents to nominate exemplary prevention approaches carried out by their organization or another organization in their area that they recommended detailing in this report. More than 100 approaches were recommended for further study. Although many respondents nominated efforts in which they were personally involved, quite often respondents recommended an approach implemented by another organization. Police programs such as D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. were among programs nominated as exemplary.

Organizations Nominated Diverse Exemplary Programs

Based on brief descriptions provided in the completed questionnaires, the programs and approaches were categorized as follows:

Type A: Collaborative or relatively comprehensive or extensive community programs and approaches.

Type B: Center-based programs with nontraditional staff, hours, or participants.

Type C: Workshops and 1-day programs provided for youth by youth.

Type D: More traditional programs provided by law enforcement officers.

Type E: General, more traditional programs and activities provided by the nationally affiliated youth-serving organizations.

Type F: Videos produced by a national organization—their utilization and youth group discussions of them.

Type G: More traditional community programs such as Neighborhood Watch and "block homes."

Approaches Selected for Case Studies Met Important Criteria

Project advisers were asked to help select three of the many interesting programs nominated by the survey respondents for further study. The advisers unanimously agreed that case studies should focus on organizations providing collaborative or relatively comprehensive or extensive community programs and approaches (Type A) or center-based programs with nontraditional staff, hours, or participants (Type B) in cities or neighborhoods with relatively high rates of crime.

All advisers independently used active recruitment of youth at high risk for violence or delinquency as a criterion for selecting the programs they nominated. Although many survey respondents nominated traditional police programs such as D.A.R.E. or programs designed to prevent delinquency such as Boys and Girls Clubs' "Smart Moves" and Girls Incorporated's "Friendly PEERsuasion," advisers also independently recommended a focus on approaches that went well beyond delinquency prevention programs and nominated organizations that provide collaborative or comprehensive community programs or nontraditional center-based programs.

Realizing that safe places are a critical concern of youth and their families, one adviser examined program descriptions for a mention of police cooperation. Also considered were respondents' assessments of the responsiveness of police to the youth organizations' requests. Based on previous studies conducted in a large number of cities, one adviser recommended against several approaches involving police departments that "on paper look good but are not really happening." The adviser recommended sites that appeared to be making advances in community policing.

Another adviser assessed the extent to which the programs reportedly provided resources and opportunities likely to foster childhood and adolescent development, especially those culturally appropriate for minority youth. As previously discussed, research in child development strongly suggests that adolescents require a range of activities that challenge them to solve problems, plan and make decisions, resist negative peer and media pulls to risky behavior, and deal with everyday frustrations. The adviser nominated approaches that described opportunities for adolescents to develop these important skills.

Based on the large body of research showing that delinquency prevention is best accomplished by reducing multiple risks and promoting multiple protective factors in adolescence, another adviser focused on the extent of arrangements for cross-agency collaboration available to comprehensively meet these needs. This adviser selected approaches that described active collaboration between public agencies focused on children, families, and communities on one hand and nonprofit youth-serving organizations on the other.

Exemplary Approaches Implemented in Three Cities Were Chosen

The recommendations for approaches for further study were based on different criteria yet were remarkably congruent and led to the selection of four approaches carried out in three cities. One approach selected for study is being implemented in Bristol, Connecticut; one in Arlington, Texas; and two in Spokane, Washington.

Followup calls to survey respondents in these sites further suggested that all three cities provide an opportunity to research exemplary collaborative approaches. These three cities also offer wide variation in terms of geographic location, economy, history, and culture. Spokane and Arlington both have relatively high rates of crime, and in all three sites the approaches are being carried out in the types of neighborhoods our survey found most likely to be affected by crime—working-class neighborhoods with sections where residents were living in poverty.

Two of the approaches, those provided by the Family Center for Girls and Boys in Bristol and the Teen Center in Arlington, involve facility-based youth development programs with special outreach to and activities for adolescents facing threats to their current and future safety and well-being. The primary program sites are settings our survey found most likely to be affected by crime—centers entirely devoted to programs for children. Both the Bristol and Arlington centers are noticeably free of graffiti, vandalism, and other evidence of structural decay evident on other buildings in the nearby vicinity. Activities in both centers are carried out with the active support and collaboration of police.

Typical of many of the surveyed organizations serving children in less affluent neighborhoods, the centers in Bristol and Arlington are providing activities 6 or more days each week for relatively high numbers of school-age children and teens. However, many of the adolescents being served in these centers are not typical of those who most frequently participate in youth centers.

The Family Center in Bristol includes among participants teen parents and their babies, young offenders assigned by the Bristol Juvenile Review Board to carry out community service, and children who are physically challenged. The Arlington Teen Center actively recruits and provides productive activities for adolescents with diverse ethnic backgrounds and a spectrum of gang affiliations. The neighborhood from which participants are drawn had been experiencing a surge of youth violence, and a relatively large number of participants have previously been involved in some of the most serious incidents, including homicides.

Thus the Bristol and Arlington programs offer approaches that hold special promise for providing wholesome alternatives for at-risk youth during the afterschool and early evening hours.

The two approaches in Spokane—Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers and the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Family Focus Program—are taking place in two neighborhoods in which the Spokane Police Department is carrying out one of the most innovative community oriented policing services (COPS) efforts in the country. Both the COPS youth volunteers in the Nevada-Lidgerwood (Nevawood) area and Family Focus in the West Central Spokane communities are integral to comprehensive COPS efforts. Before Family Focus and COPS West, Central Spokane was known as "felony flats." The contiguous Nevada and Lidgerwood neighborhoods were never among the highest crime areas, but before the COPS efforts were initiated, the community reportedly began to experience increasing rates of crime, including more burglaries, more vandalism, and more youth violence. The approaches in Spokane are distinctive because they so greatly involve the police in all aspects of dealing with the youth served.

The Organizations Implementing These Approaches Are Affiliated With One or More of the National Organizations Participating in the Study

The Family Center in Bristol and the Teen Center in Arlington are both affiliates of Girls Incorporated. The Nevawood youth volunteers are organized as a troop associated with Girls Scouts of the U.S.A., and the Family Focus program is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture 4–H and Youth Development Service.

In addition to their innovative approaches, the selected organizations are implementing traditional youth development practices that may be just as or more beneficial in creating safer places in the nonschool hours. Although the specific activities carried out by participants vary from approach to

approach, each is deeply rooted in a fundamental youth development perspective and incorporates basic youth development processes including:

- Providing a choice of age-appropriate activities that are mentally and physically challenging and have been enjoyed by generations of children and teens under the supervision of mature adults trained in child and adolescent development.
- Creating ongoing opportunities for school-age participants to share responsibilities and learn from each other, at the same time creating similar opportunities for parents, neighbors, and community organizations to work together in raising children.

Moreover, and perhaps most important, although the approaches involve staff and activities that can effectively promote wholesome development, as programs provided by many affiliates, they also demonstrably and observably are enjoyed by the young participants as well as the adults.

Some processes integral to the selected approaches are less common among other youth-serving organizations. These involve the remarkable extent to which they are reaching out into the community to involve children, teens, and adults who could greatly benefit from but are not already involved in these types of activities—actively recruiting them and when necessary modifying times, locations, organizational rules, or content to meet special needs. The organizations selected for study also seem to have an uncommonly clear recognition of the limits of any one organization's ability to serve all children in the community and to meet all the needs of the children who are being served. They are a vital part of a network of organizations that together are creating safer and more productive environments for children and teens in the nonschool hours.

The directors of the organizations selected for study were working hand in hand with other local youth development agencies affiliated with national organizations—more specifically affiliates of the YMCA of the USA in Arlington and Spokane, the Boys and Girls Clubs in Arlington and Bristol, and the Boy Scouts of America in Spokane.

This recognition and participation in a network of agencies is due as much to the communities in which they were located as to organizational direction. Each community had launched a comprehensive effort to identify and meet enduring and emerging needs of young people in the city. The innovative practices being carried out by the organizations were developed to address specific concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children identified through these systematic community efforts. All are adaptations of more typical youth development practices to meet the realities and constraints faced by school-age children and families living in their city.

Therefore the innovative approaches selected for study can best be understood in the context of the cities in which they are occurring, the needs of youth systematically identified by collaborative effort, the particular needs the organization was striving to meet, the ongoing collaboration of other youth development organizations to meet those needs, and the collaboration with other private and public agencies—in particular, the police.

The three case studies that formed a core complement to the LINC survey follow. They describe programs in the old town of Bristol, Connecticut, the growing city of Arlington, Texas, and the inner-city neighborhoods of Spokane, Washington.

Bristol, Connecticut

Bristol is located in the rolling hills of central Connecticut. The city was first incorporated in 1785 but was founded before the Revolutionary War. Like numerous New England towns that began as agrarian English settlements and rapidly developed into urban manufacturing centers, Bristol shifted early in its history from farming to clockmaking and then to production of other metal goods. Over the centuries, Bristol attracted new immigrant groups to provide the manual labor needed for industrial growth. Today Bristol's population of 60,000 has become more ethnically diverse. However, unlike larger cities that have gone through successive waves of ethnic and racial change, many of Bristol's families of French, Polish, Italian, and Irish descent have lived there for generations. Goods-producing industries have been outnumbered by service industries, and the relatively homogeneous working-class environment has changed. The central city is now marked by areas of poverty, and upscale middle-class homes are going up in the outlying areas. Yet Bristol proudly maintains its distinctive red brick 18th and 19th century structures and its blue-collar origins.

As in many New England cities and towns, honor is given to residents who can claim they are lifelong residents or Bristol natives, and prestige is earned through contributions to organizations rooted in the community rather than ones having national or State affiliations.

Many business owners were raised in Bristol, attended Bristol schools, and now contribute time to the schools as part of the Bristol Mentor program; in the 1994–1995 school year, through a school-business partnership, more than 300 people committed an hour each week to support students in schools.

Problems Affecting Youth Have Worsened

Educators and administrators of youth-serving organizations believe that many problems have intensified in the past decade. "Our city used to be more like a stable small town," one educator commented. "Now we have many children from split families moving back and forth between Bristol and other cities, new families moving in to escape big city problems but bringing big city problems with them: children who are abused, neglected, malnourished, and lacking basic medical care." Information from Bristol Hospital indicates that a growing number of such cases involve single mothers raising children in public housing. Because of mental illness, many are having great difficulty coping with their children. The schools are finding that while rates of teen pregnancy have remained the same for a period of years, younger girls—even those of middle-school age—are now having babies. Police and other agencies find that children are committing crimes at younger ages.

Public Agencies and Local Coalitions Assessed Needs

For two decades the City of Bristol Youth Services Bureau, one of 69 bureaus formed by the State of Connecticut more than 20 years ago, has been assessing the needs of children. Specifically mandated and funded jointly by the State and municipality to be an administrative coordinating unit for all community youth services, as well as a direct service provider, the Youth Services Bureau functions to meet the needs of all the city's children and teens as well as those with special needs, including youth who have come to the attention of the juvenile justice system. Although the core professional staff is relatively small (three professionals in 1995), the agency was instrumental in the formation of the Greater Bristol Community Leadership Team (GBCLT). This is an organization of local officials, representatives of community and business groups, and directors of public and private agencies and service organizations whose mission is to link the public and private sectors of the greater Bristol community to maximize opportunities for families and individuals. Based on a survey of youth and family service needs, GBCLT has designated public safety a top priority and considers organizing neighborhoods and improving access to services to be integral to its mission.

In addition, other information gathered from schools and State and local agencies (including the Bristol Police Department) led local leaders to conclude that community based services for youth, including afterschool programs, are essential for community and personal problem solving, public safety, and community development. In particular, afterschool approaches were seen as necessary to:

- Counter peer pressure to engage in harmful behavior and counter the availability of alcohol, drugs, and other temptations.
- Build children's positive self-concepts by providing them with opportunities for rewarding activities.
- Divert youth from the juvenile justice system.
- Help parents, children, and teens cope with changes in family structure.
- Alleviate boredom among some adolescents and meet children's and teens' need to have fun.

Given the range of youth issues recognized in Bristol, the Youth Services Bureau and cooperating agencies realized that a multifaceted collaborative approach would be most effective in resolving them. Identified as essential were approaches for children and adolescents already experiencing difficulties, as well as programs for promoting personal growth and development among all Bristol youth.

Implementing a Collaborative Approach Required Building Community Support

Bristol used several approaches for gaining and maintaining widespread support for creating safe places for youth in the nonschool hours:

- Preparing community leaders for collaboration to meet the needs of children and teens.
- Actively engaging many city officials and directors of influential organizations.
- Broadening the base of support by reaching into communities to achieve strategic objectives.

Family Center in Bristol, Connecticut

Family Center girls put on a show for seniors.

The primary means of implementing these approaches was through:

- Community workshops on human service activities, community change, networking on several levels, and effective youth programming.
- Experiential programs, such as the city's "Challenge Course," a facility for carrying out activities that build community teamwork and teach cooperative problem-solving skills.
- Neighborhood outreach and focus groups that targeted eight neighborhoods for training on how to bring about systematic change.

Support building led to the development of a multifaceted center that incorporated a focus on supporting families and preventing delinquency.

The Bristol Family Center for Boys and Girls Is a Comprehensive, Facility-Based Youth Development Program

The Family Center is open for activities on weekdays from 6:30 a.m., when preschoolers are dropped off for child care, until 9 p.m. when teens finish swimming, gymnastics, dance classes, or other activities. On Saturday it is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition, other events, limited to adolescents in specific grades—such as the sixth grade Friday night socials—are held on a regular basis. In the nonschool hours there is typically a stream of children and parents coming and going, groups of parents talking quietly while waiting for participants to finish activities and, not infrequently, a parent who is trying to convince a young participant that "it is really time to leave now." Neighborhood families with children are encouraged to use the playscape equipment when it is not in use for Family Center activities, and, barring rain, a few parents or other supervising adults are usually sitting outside the center.

As in most Girls Incorporated settings, center staff have both academic degrees and experiential training for providing the types of instruction and emotional support children and adolescents need to try challenging new activities—and to try again if initial attempts are not successful. A relatively high number of staff are themselves Girls Clubs of America "graduates" and consider their lives enriched and their decisions to enter the youth development profession shaped by their early and ongoing Girls Clubs experiences.

Members of the board and trustees for the Family Center are representative of the breadth of public and private sector representatives who have been involved in providing services for youth in the nonschool hours; they include an assistant superintendent of schools, the president of one of the leading industrial companies, a CPA, an insurance company administrator, an employee of a city department, an investment manager in a local branch of a major bank, and several retired residents.

Two programs in particular carried out by the Bristol Family Center are also types of youth development programs that have been found to have long-term success in reducing children's involvement in crime and delinquency. One involves outreach and services to adolescent parents and their babies. The other diverts first-time juvenile offenders from the justice system and into productive youth development programs.

The Bristol Family Center Young Parent Program Helps Pregnant and Postpartum Teens

Family Center in Bristol, Connecticut

Teen mom gains positive support at Bristol's Family Center.

For many years, clinical services for pregnant adolescents were provided by a local hospital. To help prevent the growth in inadequate child care, Girls Incorporated was asked to provide a once-a-week parenting class for adolescent mothers and fathers at the hospital clinic. However, it became evident that a more comprehensive approach was needed, given the 90-percent school dropout rate of pregnant teenagers. Many pregnant teens did not show up for scheduled physical exams and frequently missed parenting classes at the hospital. In addition to clinical services, the young mothers needed daily support both during their pregnancy and after childbirth to ensure that their own educational, health, and emotional needs were met in addition to the needs of their babies. Given its long-term affiliation with Girls Incorporated and its experience in supporting the comprehensive development of girls and teen women, the Family Center seemed the logical choice to coordinate efforts to meet this need.

Under the direction of Family Center staff and in collaboration with Bristol public schools, pregnant and postpartum teens now have the option of continuing their education at the center. School classes are held during school hours, with individual instruction available since the classes are relatively small. Instruction is given in infant development, child psychology, nutrition, and other topics integral to good parenting. Not only do the young parents lack the skills for child rearing that come with maturity, but many do not have good role models to imitate because their own mothers and fathers may never have had the opportunity to learn good parenting skills.

A room directly across the hall functions as a nursery staffed by experienced childcare workers. During breaks between classes in the Family Center and in the schools, the childcare providers encourage the young mothers and fathers to play with their babies, change them when necessary, and discuss sleeping and eating patterns and other concerns.

Frequently, typical adolescent stresses come to the fore—emotional stresses such as the need to establish an independent identity leading to conflicts with their own mothers and fathers; social affairs involving boy friends, best friends, and dating; and academic subjects involving future career choices. To address these concerns, trained Family Center staff provide case management and individual counseling. Close and ongoing coordination between the clinical staff in the hospital, the teacher assigned by the school, and the Family Center program coordinator helps ensure immediate attention to these problems. Home visits by the Family Center staff in the nonschool hours also help.

The Family Center recruits and trains adult mentors who provide the young mothers with additional support in the form of advice and friendship. Mentors are volunteers—usually parents themselves—who receive 12 hours of training before they are matched with pregnant teens. They commit at least 6 months to the program and provide between 1 to 4 hours' encouragement each week to the young mothers. More than half the matches are successful and lead to an ongoing supportive relationship that lasts throughout the perinatal period.

The program has added a peer counseling component to help strengthen the young parents' resolve to delay further pregnancies until they are older, more educated, and financially independent. Young parents who have returned to school provide information to their peers about pregnancy prevention.

According to the assistant superintendent of schools, although pregnancy rates among students have not declined, the percentage of teen mothers who complete school has increased from about 11 percent to 85 percent, and the number of teen mothers having second babies has greatly decreased. Bristol Hospital officials say very few cases of child neglect or abuse are now found among the teen parents.

The Family Center's positive support for teen parents is matched by its involvement in the lives of youth at risk of following a delinquent path.

The Bristol Juvenile Diversion Program Is a Collaborative Effort With Other Agencies

The Bristol Police Department and the Youth Services Bureau are the lead agencies in the coalition implementing the juvenile offender diversion program in which the Family Center collaborates. The coalition also involves the Bristol Public Schools, other youth development organizations, the Department of Probation, and both public and private agencies providing clinical services for school-age children and their families.

Representatives from these agencies meet on a regular basis to review cases of juveniles who have been detained by the police. Representatives who attend the Juvenile Review Board meetings are generally "hands-on" practitioners who have ongoing contact with a relatively large number of school-age children in Bristol. All information discussed during review board meetings is confidential.

First, a juvenile officer provides detailed information about the incident leading to the arrest of a juvenile, including information about all children directly or indirectly involved. During the meeting members of the board can often provide additional information about the family and background of the children involved in these incidents. Since those attending include juvenile officers from the police and probation departments, school counselors, directors of afterschool activities for adolescents, and staff from local agencies providing psychological counseling, a multifaceted view of the young offenders can be developed.

Board members discuss alternative options for a plan of action for each child, with options ranging from essays to be written by the young offenders about the consequences of their offenses for their own future and for people affected by the crime to prosecution in adult court. For first-time adolescent offenders involved in minor crimes, a common alternative is restitution through community service; in these cases the Family Center representative has the option of volunteering to place the adolescent as an aide in one of the Family Center programs.

Adolescents who perform community restitution in the Family Center must sign a contract with the Juvenile Review Board that specifies the number of hours they are to work in a set calendar period. They are given the Family Center telephone number, the name of a staff contact, and instructions about how to call and set up their work schedule. If they do not contact the center staff or fail to complete their contract, the review board is notified and the case is brought up for review again.

The only Family Center staff members who know which young program aides are providing involuntary service are the one that served as the representative on the review board and the participant's contact in the center. They make a special effort to provide extra opportunities for counseling that will help the adolescent choose more constructive, productive actions on an ongoing basis, including continuing to spend nonschool hours as a regular participant.

Police Are Involved With the Family Center in Other Ways as Well

In addition to their ongoing Juvenile Review Board actions, police officers work directly with children in occasional projects jointly sponsored by youth organizations and the police departments in neighborhoods where children appear to be especially at risk. During activities such as antidrug poster-coloring contests, officers talk with the children and have an opportunity to learn about drug activities, family abuse, and other threats to the children's well-being. Although such intelligence about illegal neighborhood activities is investigated and can result in law enforcement actions, officers more typically respond to problems in the family by referring the family to a local agency with programs or services appropriate for helping resolve specific problems.

Bristol officers also provide special training for youth organization participants on such topics as gang awareness and dealing with babysitting emergencies. Patrol officers regularly drop by youth centers as part of the Bristol Police Department's "Walk-and-Talk" community policing approach. In their community outreach, officers have reportedly changed the focus of Neighborhood Watch from complaint sessions to proactive citizen activities for monitoring gang and drug activity and organizing block parties and other productive activities for children and teens. The police department helps obtain small grants for these parties.

Community Support and Volunteer Time Are Essential to the Success of the Family Center

The Juvenile Review Board and the Young Parent Program are two examples of the coalitions formed in Bristol to en-

sure that children and teens receive the services they need to avoid becoming involved in crime in the nonschool hours. Another is the Child Protection Team coordinated by the Bristol Hospital Department of Social Services and composed of representatives from the Family Center, the Department of Mental Retardation, a sexual assault crisis intervention organization, the visiting nurses association, the Bristol Board of Education Special Services Administration, and the Bristol Youth Services Bureau. The team assesses cases of abuse or neglect that come to the attention of any of the collaborating agencies, takes appropriate action, involving other agencies if necessary, and conducts followup assessments.

Volunteer activities are encouraged by both the public and private sectors. Students are given credit toward high school graduation for community service. More than 300 students each year work in the nonschool hours as volunteer aides in the Family Center, the local hospital, the library, and other community organizations. Each school in Bristol has been "adopted" by a business that encourages its employees to meet with an individual student during the work day. Employees of city agencies are also encouraged to become mentors.

In other words, Bristol has successfully mobilized a variety of community resources to meet agreed-upon needs for support for teen parents and positive experiences for children to counteract a variety of risk factors for youth in this changing community.

Arlington, Texas

With a population of more than 270,000, Arlington, Texas, is in essence the newest and largest city involved in the case studies and the city with the widest range of economic levels. Located between Dallas and Fort Worth and within sight of the tall buildings in both central cities, Arlington is the home base for several major corporations including American Airlines, Arlington General Motors, and the electronic firm Tandy's Incredible Universe. The faculty of the University of Texas at Arlington, located in the center of the city, have helped boost the educational level of residents to one of the highest in the Nation. Business at hotels and restaurants is supported by their proximity to the Dallas-Forth Worth Airport, the theme park Six Flags Over Texas, and a new baseball park.

Arlington residents are offended by those who refer to the city as a bedroom community for Dallas and Fort Worth, pointing out that Arlington was established as a trading post more than 150 years ago. However, as with many Texas cities, the development of the settlement into a major urban area was primarily a post-World War II phenomenon made possible by 20th century transportation. Residents are fond of pointing out that Arlington has an established reputation for good schools, high-quality living, and a flavor distinct from either of the two large bordering cities. Arlington has grown rapidly in the past decade precisely because of those characteristics and has attracted a spectrum of new residents, including commuters who are building large homes in new, well-to-do neighborhoods. Many of Arlington's new families have school-age children and two parents working to maintain affluent life styles.

New arrivals have also included families living in poverty who are trying to escape the severe difficulties, including early deaths, common to the economically depressed areas of the larger cities. Large apartment complexes have been designated as assisted housing and are themselves ethnic enclaves of primarily African-American or Hispanic residents within the larger confines of Arlington. Both long-term residents and recent arrivals are concerned by the city's precipitous growth, changing nature, and consequent strain on services.

Crime Is a Concern in Arlington

Arlington's history of problems involving crime and delinquency are well documented by studies sponsored by city, State, and nonprofit agencies. In 1993, Tarrant County, which contains all of Arlington and part of Fort Worth, had one of the highest crime rates in Northeast Texas, surpassed only by adjacent Dallas County. The area had a relatively high availability of guns; Tarrant, Dallas, and adjacent counties had more than 9,000 dealers legally licensed to sell firearms.[1] This may help explain why in Tarrant County in 1993, more than 70 juveniles were referred to court for violent crimes, including 25 for murder.[2] But a recent study by a senior faculty member at Sam Houston State University suggests that Arlington's overall efforts to reduce crime are having a demonstrable impact. The Fort Worth-Arlington metropolitan area had the second highest overall crime rate among all metropolitan areas in Texas in 1984, but in 1993 it ranked

15th. Although the rate of violent crime increased, the increase was less than in the majority of other Texas metropolitan areas.[3] Moreover, perhaps due to vigorous substance abuse prevention efforts in the Arlington area, Tarrant County has had a relatively low rate of drug-related arrests.[4] Gang prevention also seems to be paying off. Police officers report that Arlington youth who identify themselves as gang members do not appear to be connected with gangs in other cities but belong to new, transitory groups that borrow gang names and symbols described in newspapers and on television from Los Angeles, Chicago, and other cities.

Organizations and Coalitions Pave the Way for a Comprehensive Response to Youth Risks

Crimes affecting youth are a special concern among the many civic associations committed to preserving quality of life in Arlington. They gathered information, analyzed it, and drew up recommendations that eventually became a specific plan of action. Steps along the way included the following:

- The United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County organized an effort to assess community problems and to identify the resources needed to address the most serious. Under the direction of the United Way's 1990 Priorities Committee composed of executives from corporations, volunteer organizations, and public agencies, an indepth study of community problems was launched. Findings regarding youth and their families accounted for 8 of the 10 problems given top priority by the Priorities Committee. They were school dropout; chemical misuse and dependency; family distress, stress, and life crises; illiteracy; lack of child care; youth at risk (of not making a successful transition to adulthood); teen pregnancy; and violence and victimization. Lack of child care and youth at risk were identified as focal issues to be addressed through collaborative community effort.

- Citywide task forces, spurred by a City of Arlington Crime Prevention Action Plan designed by 100 residents and community professionals, carried out research in the areas of violent crimes, education and youth, business, and neighborhoods. What they found led them to recommend the creation of afterschool and summer programs as well as greater availability of existing programs.[5]

- Arlington Human Service Planners (AHSP) convened a group of citizens and youth service professionals to explore the dimensions of issues concerning children in the city. In addition to a staff member from the agency funding AHSP (United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County), the AHSP Committee included representatives from seven voluntary youth-serving organizations and representatives from city agencies that deal with youth (including the police department, the public library, and the department of parks and recreation). The school district provided information about the precipitous increase in the number of children entering Arlington schools in the past decade and showed the extent of problems such as the number of pregnant and parenting teens in school and school dropout rates. The police provided information about the number and types of arrests of youth, and the Department of Child Protective Services pinpointed neighborhoods most likely to report child abuse. The AHSP Committee recommended the establishment of a permanent city-sponsored citizens commission on youth and families.

These collaborative efforts led to a specific plan of action for providing afterschool programs for as many school-age children in Arlington as possible. The plan had three primary activities:

- Actively recruiting high-risk children and teens to participate in existing centers, including Boys and Girls Clubs Centers and the Arlington Youth Services Multipurpose Center.

- Creating new centers in unsupervised areas where children and teens were already congregating in the nonschool hours. Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington has taken the lead in this effort.

- Providing licensed childcare in the afterschool hours in all elementary schools in Arlington and contracting with the three major youth-serving organizations in Arlington to administer the childcare and furnish age-appropriate youth development activities. The three agencies involved are the YMCA, Arlington Youth Services, and Arlington Boys and Girls Clubs. The three organizations have divided the schools more or less equally, and fees for childcare are based on a sliding scale depending on the family's income.

The Teen Center Provides Safe Activities 7 Days a Week

The Teen Center was opened in 1992 by Arlington Youth Services (AYS) as part of its ongoing adaptation of services to help address concerns about high-risk youth. AYS itself

was established in 1976 as the Arlington Girls Club, and within 3 years a second Arlington Girls Club center was opened. While retaining its strong programming for girls, the organization began to add additional services in the early 1980s, with coeducational activities provided in the new Multipurpose Center (renamed the Teen Center in 1992 by the adolescent participants).

The Teen Center occupies a medium-sized, one-story concrete building in one of the older city areas in Southeast Arlington. This is a neighborhood of small homes surrounding the block containing a large elementary school, the Teen Center, and an adjacent small building housing an AYS meeting room and a storage room.

The primary areas in the Teen Center consist of an entrance area with a check-in desk, a separate section of administrative offices and meeting room for the AYS staff, a gymnasium/basketball court, a photography darkroom, a kitchen, and a large game room. The game room has an area with computers, another with multipurpose tables used for arts and crafts, and a third with a couch and chairs, all surrounding centrally placed Fooz Ball and pool tables.

The Teen Center is open 7 days a week. On weekends it is open from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.; teens typically start drifting in around noon. On school days it stays open until 9 p.m., except on Wednesday, when it is open until 10 p.m. (with only the teens 15 and older permitted to stay). The Teen Center commonly attracts up to 100 participants each day. (The unduplicated count of teens who participated in center activities between January 1, 1995, and March 15, 1995, was 552. Over 50 percent of participants in January through March were aged 15 or older. The vast majority—(83 percent) were minority group members, predominantly African-American, Hispanic, and mixed race.) Active recruitment by two outreach workers has resulted in the participation of many teens identified by the police and schools as at risk. Participation is limited to youth aged 11 to 18 who follow the center rules formally endorsed by the teens.

Youth participant, Arlington Youth Services

Photo taken by member of photo class at Teen Center in Arlington.

Observance of Rules Is Emphasized

Participants agree that all who come to the Teen Center will take care of it, obey all laws, respect the neighborhood, and treat each other and staff with respect. Participants who smoke in the building, leave trash for others to pick up, or refuse to cooperate with staff are asked to leave the building. Instances of stealing, property destruction, threats, violence, or possession of illegal substances result in calls to police and legal action.

An additional rule that the teens decided was critical is the prohibition of gang symbols. Although many of the participants claim gang membership, the Teen Center is considered neutral territory. Signs, colors, gestures, and other representations of gang affiliation are not welcome. Weapons of any type, including sticks and metal objects, are by agreement not brought into the center.

Given the large numbers of teen boys in the center and many past incidents involving violence (in other settings), all staff members are vigilant and constantly monitor all areas. Except for restrooms and the photography darkroom (used only under the supervision of the instructor), there is agreement that doors to all rooms occupied by participants must stay open at all times. Participants are allowed to bring their own audio equipment as long as they use earphones, but another unwritten rule is "no loud music."

Staff Are Conscious of the Teens' Home and Neighborhood Environments

Because many participants live in neighborhoods where respect is difficult for adults to achieve, they are sensitive to challenges from other teens, which usually occur during competitive sports. Alert staff typically take immediate action in such situations, first by breaking the tension with a simple take-charge action like blowing a whistle or making a time-out sign, then by talking quietly to the two participants involved in the challenge and demanding an instant replay. No one is blamed, everyone saves face, and respect is maintained.

The majority of participants have been recruited through outreach to teens who have already been experiencing difficulties, including contacts with police, in neighborhoods where most teens never previously had the opportunity to participate in constructive activities in the nonschool hours. One critical barrier to participation—the need to get safely to and from the center—has been overcome by vans owned by Arlington Youth Services and operated by staff. These make frequent runs between participants' neighborhoods and the center immediately after school is over and at the end of specific blocks of planned activities.

Teens interviewed have made clear that part of their preference for spending many hours playing basketball in the Teen Center was not because of the basketball court. "We play basketball on the street," they say. But there is no staff member on the street to referee when issues of respect arise. "Archie, he knows when to say 'chill.' On the street, there's no Archie to say chill, so we fight."

Some of the staff are considered more than just "OK." The physical education instructor, who has a rich experience in working with delinquent youth, is admired as much for being fair as for his height and obvious skills on the basketball court. He recognizes the dreams the teens are playing out on the Teen Center court, and while he doesn't discourage these dreams, he takes opportunities to sit on the bleachers and talk to them about more realistic ways of achieving success as adults. The photography instructor, a professional who has spent many hours convincing photo supply shops to provide equipment to the Teen Center, has sparked great interest in capturing the world of the center and the participants' neighborhoods on film. He has instructed and inspired a large number of teen "hot shots" to produce artistic photos that are rightfully applauded by residents throughout the city.

To ensure that girls and younger teens are not excluded from the basketball court, some hours are set aside exclusively for their use. To facilitate development of the more advanced skills of the older teens, the court is reserved on Wednesday nights from 6 to 10 p.m. for their use, and at 8 o'clock the younger teens must leave the center.

Staff Provide Opportunities for Teen Decisionmaking and Responsibility

For the most part, the staff provide guidance by asking about future schedules and needs for supplies. "Are you guys going to want to do anything special for Easter? If you want to make baskets or something like that for the kids at home, you need to give me a list of stuff you need—like eggs or whatever." Or, "They say it's going to be nice this weekend. Do you guys want us to get hot dogs or meat and charcoal so you can cook stuff for lunch on Saturday?"

More formal opportunities are provided for 3-month positions as paid Teen Center youth workers. Only four paid positions are available at any given time for teens aged 14 years and older, so the jobs are actively competed for by the teens. The teens must fill out formal applications and are provided with a complete job description listing all tasks required of aides—from washing out trash cans to introducing new members to the rules of the Teen Center and to other youth. Applicants are interviewed, and those hired receive performance reviews. Although the teens see this as a good way to earn money, the staff are more interested in teaching good work habits. Because the youth workers are responsible for keeping the Teen Center clean and tidy, they, rather than the staff, are the ones most likely to make sure that the other participants obey the rules about taking care of the center and not leaving trash for others to pick up.

Participants are also organized for carrying out work in the neighborhood such as gardening for elderly residents. According to one of the staff, the younger participants who do not yet qualify for paid employment are those most enthusiastic about such opportunities. Organized activities that are

more likely to hold the older teens' interest include programs dealing with concerns teens are facing on a day-to-day basis, such as substance abuse. Pool tournaments, poster contests for events such as Black History Month, and activities involving science and math puzzles appeal to them.

Teens in all three groups independently offered the same suggestion for what they wanted changed in the center—longer hours on weekends, until 10 or 11 p.m.

> "We like this place. We learn how to do nice things for each other."
>
> "Before I was always in trouble. Here I have good stuff to do and someone to break up fights."
>
> "Other places kick you out—not here."
>
> "In school I always fail. Here I do good."

Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington Provides a Spectrum of Youth Development Programs

Girls Incorporated is one of several national organizations providing center-based afterschool programs in Arlington. Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington provides programs at six locations in different parts of the city.[6] It fully demonstrates the characteristics of seasoned youth organizations delineated earlier (fiscal and administrative knowhow, professional staff knowledgeable in child development, and the ability to involve children in activities that develop leadership skills). Organized and incorporated in 1959, its motto is "Leading Arlington's Youth for Today and Tomorrow." The mission of the organization is "to help all youth, with special emphasis on youth at risk, develop to their maximum potential."

The Main Branch and the Southeast Branch are housed in buildings owned by Boys and Girls Clubs. As an outgrowth of an afterschool program, one branch was created on the grounds of a school. One center limited to youth 13 and older is located in a city shopping mall. Except for this relatively new program exclusively for adolescents, all branches serve boys and girls from the ages of 6 through 17 during nonschool hours on weekdays and Saturdays.

The Pebble Creek Branch and the Parklane Branch operate in space provided by the owners of apartment complexes where many single mothers receiving housing assistance live with their children. The manager of the Parklane Apartments interviewed for this project was enthusiastic about the onsite branch and its effect on the children. She described the destructive behavior of the children, especially the 9- to 12-year-olds, before the branch opened, pointing out that "with 300 children around and nothing for them to do, of course they were getting into fights and destroying property." She excitedly pointed out areas that in addition to being vandalism free are now clean and neat. "They all love getting the awards for doing cleanups," she said.

The Main Branch in Central Arlington Is Typical of Many Boys and Girls Clubs Facilities Around the Country

In addition to a gym, the Main Branch has a large game room furnished with a counter where the staff welcome and check members in as they arrive and welcome and record information about guest children who accompany members. The game rooms are equipped with a number of pool tables and Fooz Ball tables, which are in high demand and provide a social focus for children and teens.

As at the Main Branch, facilities typically have another relatively large room furnished with long tables and chairs and several individual stations with computers. Here children complete homework assignments, receive tutoring, work together on quiet projects such as newsletters, and participate in programs that involve discussion groups and written materials.

Except for computers, which are typically the newest equipment, furnishings are commonly long-lasting, sturdy, and utilitarian, and the floors (other than the high-gloss gym floor) are swept and polished clean but often scuffed with many years of use. Walls are frequently adorned with drug and crime prevention posters furnished by national organizations; bright splashes of color are provided by the artwork of the younger children, posters for community events made by the older children, and trophies and awards for the many "bests" earned by club members.

Branches in public housing apartment buildings are more likely to consist of a single large room divided by furnishings into areas for different functions. Members of the smaller branches are driven on one of several club vans to use the gym at the Main Branch.

Staff use sanctions for breaking rules in a way that can help children take positive actions to redeem themselves. For example, since rule breaking frequently occurs when children become overexcited and lash out verbally or physically, "time

Paul Knudsen, Arlington Youth Services

Arlington Teen Center kids do yard work for older residents.

out" is used to discipline a child whose behavior is disruptive. Staff are unambiguously instructed to locate a time out close to the activity in which the infraction occurred. During the time out, the disciplined children are required to sit quietly with their legs crossed and their hands folded in their laps until they are calm enough to rejoin the activity.

Teens Praise the SmartMoves Program

"SmartMoves," the Boys and Girls Clubs comprehensive primary prevention program, provides small-group discussion about temptations many children entering their teen years face on a daily basis, including alcohol use and premature sexual activity. The program helps adolescents realize how they can refuse to take serious risks without seeming "not cool" or becoming social outcasts.

Feedback from the teens indicates that they first came to the local club because it was there and they had nowhere else to go. They stayed because the club "hires good staff people—people who go out of their way to do things for kids." Favorite activities are carwash fundraisers, volunteer work in nursing homes and at community cleanups, and field trips to places they have never been before.

When asked what approaches they thought should be replicated throughout the country for all teens, teens have praised the SmartMoves program for the effects they said were visible among the participants in their neighborhood, especially on attitudes toward sex and drugs and subsequent behavior.

Youth participant, Arlington Youth Services

Youth pitch in to brighten up outside of Arlington's Teen Center.

They have recommended that all adolescents participate in the program, which they are quite sure helps "the younger kids" be safer in the nonschool hours.

School-Based Child Care in Elementary Schools Keeps Younger Students Safe After Classes Are Over

The three organizations that provide school-based childcare (YMCA, Arlington Youth Services, and Arlington Boys and Girls Clubs) have different independent functions and call their afterschool programs by different names. However, they have established essentially the same policies and practices. All hire University of Texas students majoring in relevant fields as onsite staff for the programs. All are qualified to provide academic tutoring. Staff hired by all three organizations prepare weekly "lesson plans" specifying a range of activities appropriate for children of different ages and with different interests. Each organization meets the high standards required for licensed childcare, including provision of safe places, a relatively high staff-to-participant ratio, wholesome snacks, and a sign-out procedure that ensures each child leaving is in the care of an authorized adult.

All meet in either the school gymnasium or school cafeteria as soon as school is over, and the activities carried out by the children involve a choice of age-appropriate physical exercise (such as circle games for the youngest children and tether ball or relay races for the oldest), arts and crafts for fostering fine motor skills, board games for broadening intellectual skills, and cooperative projects for developing social skills. Younger children ask for and receive more individual attention from the staff than children approaching adolescence, who are more interested in communicating with each other. With the occasional exception of a child who has been assigned to a solitary, short time out for breaking a rule known to all participants (such as pushing or shoving), and a num-

ber of the youngest children who tend to run out of steam and get cranky as evening approaches, most children appear to be happily occupied in one-on-one or group activities.

The Arlington Police Department Is Strongly Involved in Afterschool Programs

A prime area of police involvement is in the juvenile diversion program, in which police play an important role in helping identify detained juveniles for assignment to the Teen Center by the courts.

In addition, the Arlington Police Department carries out highly visible key efforts to create safer places for school-age children. Its efforts involve a wide spectrum of independent crime prevention programs, some implemented by the department itself and some carried out as part of the City of Arlington Crime Prevention Action Plan mentioned earlier. The department provides formal support to youth organizations, and officers at every rank in the department, including the chief, carry out volunteer activities.

Independent departmental efforts include more than 25 age-appropriate, relatively short youth education programs covering a range of issues. For the youngest latch-key children (kindergarten through grade 4), programs focus on such topics as self-help in emergency situations and "stranger dangers." Programs for children approaching adolescence (grades 4 through 6) include making choices, living with alcoholic parents, responding to gang alerts, and babysitting safely. The department also implements more sustained approaches, many developed as part of U.S. Department of Justice efforts, such as the D.A.R.E. program. To familiarize children with police, officers distribute trading cards with their pictures, their descriptions, and safety tips.

The School Resource Officer Program Plays a Key Role in the Arlington Crime Prevention Action Plan

The goals of the School Resource Officer Program are to (1) provide a valuable service to the Arlington Independent School District and the community as a liaison between the school district and the police department, (2) communicate with youth in a positive manner and dispel myths and misconceptions, (3) educate youth by providing relevant and informative educations programs, (4) enhance the police's image by example and through positive youth contacts, and (5) provide problem resolution, counseling, and enforcement when necessary. Officers who apply for the position are selected in part on the basis of a prior record of "positive citizen contacts." As part of their duties, school resource officers maintain contacts with and actively refer children to other community agencies providing services for children, including the scouting organizations, Camp Fire, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, and Big Brothers and Sisters. School resource officers are also encouraged to become Boy Scout Explorer Post leaders.

Patrol Officers Also Provide Ongoing Formal Support for Safe Afterschool Activities

Patrol officers carry out background checks of the youth organizations' staff before they are hired. Staff say the police respond rapidly to any calls about potential crimes or crime-related incidents. As part of their regular patrol, officers stop in at youth centers when programs are in progress and stay at least a few minutes to talk to the young participants.

At the Teen Center, patrol officers regularly drop by in the late afternoon and remain to watch and cheer basketball games. They have an easy comraderie with the staff and many of the participants. Their presence is not only welcomed by those involved in Teen Center activities but is key to the residents' willingness to have the center in their neighborhood. When the Teen Center was first proposed, the neighborhood was literally up in arms at the idea of having gang members and a large number of minority teens concentrated in the area. However, once the police made clear that they would patrol regularly to keep the peace, the community agreed to give the center a trial period. The more frequent presence of the police in the community is now seen as a benefit rather than a necessity.

In addition to cooperating formally with the youth organizations, the police department also encourages officers and civilian staff to actively support the organizations in a volunteer capacity. Top administrators serve on the organizations' advisory boards and capital fund campaigns; staff at every rank devote off-duty hours to coaching, leading, and working with Arlington's children and teens on a regular basis.

The Approach in Arlington Receives Wide Community Support

Community leaders interviewed as part of this study are pleased with the services being provided by the youth organizations described here. Some feel that more caution should be exercised when recruiting adolescents who have committed crimes. However, even those with the most reservations

about serving young offenders or other at-risk youth take pride in participants' individual success stories.

By and large community members appear to strongly endorse many of the innovations that have been made to foster this success. Coalitions have been formed between professional organizations providing youth services, and children and teens in youth organizations greatly benefit from the direct services and financial support of volunteer auxiliaries and community betterment organizations such as the Junior League. Members of the women's auxiliary for AYS provide hours of onsite administrative support as well as helping hands for creative projects. Their gala annual fundraisers such as the Cinderella Ball result in ongoing support for activities for children most in need of safe places in the nonschool hours.

Spokane, Washington

Shortly before the end of the 19th century, the first settlers of European descent moved inland from towns on the Oregon-Pacific coast and established sawmills on the Spokane River. Surrounded by large mountainous tracts of towering evergreen trees, the area had for many generations been Indian fishing lands; the natural resources attracted other white settlers who founded Spokane. Within a few years of their arrival, the State of Washington was established. As with many western cities, Spokane's population soared when the railroad reached town. The boom continued when precious minerals were discovered, and today the population stands at more than 180,000. In addition to being a major distribution point for goods for the Northwest, the city provides an economic, educational, and cultural center for the northeastern part of the State. Residents take pride in the city's own acclaimed symphony orchestra and riverside parks built for the 1974 World's Fair.

Recent migration from the larger urban coastal cities has brought new middle class residents to Spokane who are fleeing urban blight and seeking a "better way to live." However, they rapidly discover that, though smaller in size, Spokane also has its bleak side. It has neighborhoods in which many residents live in poverty, and it has problems often associated with poverty that have a negative impact on day-to-day life.

Many new residents in Spokane arrive with no mainstream American-style leadership skills and few skills for surviving in an urban area. Some are members of minority groups that have been disproportionately affected by poverty, including Native Americans and African-Americans. Others are recent immigrants from Southeast Asia and East India, while still others are of European descent and now enmeshed in poverty.

Youth Issues Are Identified by a Citywide Youth Commission

Established by city ordinance in 1985 and using the "Caring Community Model" developed by University of Washington researchers David Hawkins and Richard Catalano, the Youth Commission has taken responsibility for communication and networking, investigation and research, and advocacy. A "report card" on Spokane area youth sponsored by the commission and area businesses found:[8]

- The school dropout rate was lower than the national average, but 1,000 Spokane County students who entered the freshman year in high school in 1988 did not graduate; Spokane pays about $3.3 million per month to support dropouts and their families.
- Drugs and alcohol were used several times a week by 45 percent of Spokane area youth; 15 percent used them daily. Among 10- to 17-year-olds arrested in Spokane, 80 percent used drugs or alcohol, and 65 percent were dependent on substances; 40 percent started using drugs before age 12.
- Over 20 percent of youth aged 16 through 19 who were actively seeking employment in 1989 could not find jobs. Most lacked the skills needed for employment.
- One out of eight 17-year-old teens in Spokane was functionally illiterate.
- In 1986, almost 600 teenagers gave birth; another 556 teens terminated pregnancies; 11 percent of all births in Spokane were to mothers under 20 years of age.
- In 1987, there were 3,916 arrests of school-age children (10 through 17), meaning that about 10 percent of all school-age youth were arrested.

A recent research effort spearheaded by the Youth Commission included a survey conducted by the YMCA to assess the needs of teens throughout the city, a majority of whom requested a center of their own. In response, the commission rapidly conducted an inventory of buildings that could serve the purpose using resources provided by the public and private sectors.

Realizing that the results of citywide surveys do not necessary capture priorities of particular neighborhoods, committees formed in the West Central Community Center by the Community Development Association carried out their own neighborhood needs assessment and publicly presented findings and recommendations to the Spokane City Council. Rather than focusing on problem behavior involving individual neighborhood youth, West Central Spokane task forces have focused on community conditions that need to be addressed to prevent problems involving school-age children and to create a safer and more productive community for children and their families. In January 1992, based on results of five monthly public neighborhood meetings convened after several extremely serious incidents of violent victimization of children, an ad hoc Security Task Force composed of residents, representatives from schools and city agencies, and West Central Community Center staff identified the categories of issues that needed to be resolved in order to prevent future crimes involving children:

- **Police-community relations.** Specific conditions included low levels of service, perceived discrimination against minority group residents, and lack of communication between the police and residents.
- **Neighborhood security improvements.** Conditions included lack of traffic signs, poor neighborhood lighting, neighborhood eyesores (abandoned houses and cars and other trash), and lack of safe places for entertainment in the neighborhood.
- **Security education.** Parents needed to learn how to take more responsibility for the supervision of their children.
- **Block networking and organizing.** A major concern was the lack of communication between neighbors. This resulted in the inability to take coordinated action to ensure the safety of children and families.

The task force provided 30 recommendations that were translated into actions that led to the collaborations and approaches described in this report.

Components of the approaches taken in Spokane include:

- The West Central Community Center, which operates with the cooperation of many community-based organizations.
- The Washington State University Family Focus Program, which teaches life skills to adults.
- COPS West, a ministation staffed by community volunteers.
- Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers, teens who participate in crime reduction activities under the supervision of police.

The West Central Community Center's Outreach and Programs Seek to Break the Cycle of Poverty

Spokane's West Central neighborhood is a multiethnic community that has experienced some of Spokane's worst problems associated with poverty, including crime. The West Central Community Center (under the direction of the West Central Community Development Association) functions as a locus of community consensus building for innovation and change. The center is working closely with regional directors of 4–H and Girl Scouts to develop new procedures that will better meet the needs of neighborhood children.

The physical plant is a large, one-story modern building constructed more than 16 years ago as part of a federally funded effort to revitalize the social and economic structure in the surrounding neighborhood. In its first 10 years, the West Central Community Development Association concentrated on developing the Community Center facility and implementing programs designed to break the cycle of poverty in which many neighborhood families were enmeshed. WIC (a Special Supplement Food Program for Women, Infants and Children), Head Start, classes to teach parenting skills, and other community education classes were made available in the center, as were some youth development activities. However, the programs had minimal participation among those most in need, according to the center's original executive director. This changed when rigorous outreach was conducted in the surrounding neighborhood, in large part through the efforts of COPS West and Family Focus (as discussed later).

A large number of the small, modest bungalows that constitute most of the West Central neighborhood house single mothers struggling to feed and clothe their children or older residents living on fixed minimal stipends. Although a number of residents have always lived in the area, some single mothers followed husbands or boyfriends who were incarcerated in the nearby county correctional facility. A little over 5 years ago, few neighbors knew each other, and most were afraid to go out after dark because of crime including rapes and other attacks on people and property. Many residents felt totally isolated and depressed about neighborhood conditions but didn't think that they could do anything about it.

Today the West Central Community Center is a beehive of activity. Referrals for virtually any social, psychological, or health service are easily accessible in written form or from Community Center staff. During school hours, the center is a home away from home for developmentally delayed adults who are cared for by trained providers until their primary caretakers return from their jobs. The center also provides a safe and productive environment for children and teens in the hours before and after school.

Beginning in the early morning, many working parents drop their children off for before-school youth development activities. Rather than being left in empty homes and walking to school through unsupervised areas, elementary school children have choices of activities in which they can participate until they are taken by van to school.

4–H Clubs Are Involved

Realizing the important role they could play before as well as after school, 4–H has started an early morning club in the center in conjunction with the Family Focus Program. The 4–H Club activities, provided as part of the Family Focus Program, are geared for children living in urban environments and facing urban realities. Many of the older children are excited about participating in 4–H projects—hands-on activities accompanied by information tied to the activities that seems like "good stuff to know" rather than like "boring lessons."

From after school until early evening, the center is filled with children and adolescents participating in a range of activities, beginning with snacks and homework help and followed by a choice of age-graded programs. The administrative staff is working hand in hand with directors of regional offices of national youth-serving organizations to develop the interest and capacity of the community residents to provide volunteer-led youth programs.

Girl Scouts Are Involved

The Inland Empire Girl Scout Council is one of the organizations working with the center. Until recently Girl Scouts did not have a visible presence in the West Central community. Many mothers in the neighborhood never had an opportunity to be Girl Scouts or other youth group participants as children. So when the council first tried to organize troops, they found a lack of women in the neighborhood who valued youth development activities sufficiently to volunteer to be trained as leaders.

In response to this lack, the Girl Scout Council adopted innovative procedures to meet the needs of girls and to introduce neighborhood families to the benefits of Girl Scouting. A professional staff member is organizing and leading troop

Family Focus Coalition and WSU Spokane County Cooperative Extension

After-school activity at West Central Community Center features team-building game.

activities in the center. Parents' interest and confidence in taking over troop activities are being bolstered by their recruitment for weekend events and their involvement in projects the girls take home to complete.

Although the council has adapted ordinary procedures to meet the realities in the West Central community, it has not changed the nationally developed, age-appropriate skill-building program that results in recognized achievements by girls in kindergarten through 12th grade.

The Community Center is also the primary meeting place for cross-cutting groups creating a safe community and promoting the participation of all residents, including children and teens. Many of these meetings involve coalitions of professionals and community representatives who are collaborating to ensure that services provided in the community are as productive as possible and to plan future joint enterprises.

The Washington State University Family Focus Program Teaches Family Life Skills

The Family Focus Program outreach component in West Central Spokane is designed to teach skills to adults who, while growing up, did not learn basic methods for managing their own personal lives or their own homes. Family Focus is administered by the Spokane County Cooperative Extension of Washington State University (WSU) and supervised by the WSU community resource coordinator.

Small classes are held in the homes of the participants, concentrating on providing basic living skills first; second, skills to conduct the everyday business of running a household; and third, skills for parenting and managing a family. Finally, skills for working with larger groups in the community are discussed and opportunities to exercise them provided through newly formed neighborhood groups.

Processes integral to Family Focus are designed to break down social isolation and bring neighbors together for mutual day-to-day support and assistance. A door-to-door visit by the Family Focus Team recruited neighborhood residents for the program. The Family Focus outreach and implementation staff, family resource assistants, are for the most part down-to-earth women whose many years of practical experience in organizing homes, managing their own families, and participating as volunteers in community associations have equipped them well for their roles.

Conversations with women in the program indicate they are learning many routine skills—such as using time outs to deal with their own children. They are gaining confidence in their ability to take charge of themselves, their homes, their families, and their neighborhoods. Program outcomes achieved from January 1, 1993, through June 30, 1994, have been documented by a WSU study. They included a 35-percent increase in the average time parents spent with their children each day, a 38-percent increase in the time parents spent on self-improvement activities, a 41-percent decrease in watching television, and a 58-percent increase in the number working or going to school.[9]

The COPS West Ministation Binds Neighborhood Adults and Youth to Police to Reduce Crime

Housed in a building donated by a local business owner, COPS (Community Oriented Policing) West is a ministation staffed by community volunteers (many of whom are Family Focus participants or graduates), a neighborhood resource officer assigned by the Spokane Police Department and, more recently, representatives from a number of other public agencies including the Office of the District Attorney and Adult and Juvenile Probation and Parole. COPS West was organized in 1991 by a community resident who had recently moved to the West Central neighborhood from a distant urban area. Horrified by the abduction of two children and the murder of one child shortly after she moved into the area, she worked with the West Central Community Development Association director, the Spokane Police Department, and business owners in the neighborhood to create a comprehensive set of approaches for reducing crime and restoring community control.

Both traditional and innovative neighborhood policing techniques are used by COPS West. Block Watch and McGruff safe houses are part of the effort as are D.A.R.E. and neighborhood cleanups. But COPS West has also implemented other strategies. Teams of neighbors are trained in dispute resolution and respond to calls involving conflicts between community children and teens or other residents, if the neighborhood resource officer is confident that the confrontation can be handled without violence. Adults patrol the streets before and after school to ensure that children are safe and that older teens are not harassing each other or younger children.

A close bond has been forged between uniformed police officers and residents through joint participation in upbeat community events and programs designed to express appreciation for each other's efforts, such as Holiday Meals for Police Officers. Together with WSU and the West Central Community Development Association, COPS West has taken the lead in organizing events enjoyed by the whole neighborhood, such as the now annual Neighbor Days when a parade highlights the start of an entire day of celebration. Integral to community events is the participation of neighborhood children and teens in the COPS Junior Volunteer Groups and other youth groups formed at the Community Center. The neighborhood resource officer is highly visible at many community events, coalition meetings and, as noted in an independent study of the Spokane Police Department's Neighborhood Resource Officer Program, carries out activities responsive to the community's needs.[10]

Together COPS West (including its neighborhood resource officer component) and WSU Family Focus have achieved documented success in creating a safer community. According to the police department, the effort has resulted in a 40-percent decrease in crime in the West Central neighborhood between 1991 and 1994. In 1994 the police department hired the resident who

initiated COPS West to coordinate the numerous COPS organizations taking form in neighborhoods around the city.

Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers Are Trained by Police to Help Prevent Crime

Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers is a core subgroup of one of Spokane's neighborhood COPS initiatives. Currently the group has more than 60 active participants, both girls and boys, most in their midteens. The girls who belong to Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers are officially a part of Girl Scout Troop 437, originally organized more than 10 years ago as a Brownie Girl Scout troop for 6- to 8-year-old girls living in a predominantly working class neighborhood adjacent to the West Central community. The leader inspired them to go well beyond basic requirements for earning Girl Scout badges and awards and to tackle projects that other girls their age never thought they could.

By the time they were Senior Scouts (aged 15 to 17), the girls were anxious to take on projects to correct neighborhood conditions that had become visible problems, such as a deteriorated local park that was no longer safe for their activities. Realizing the changes that the West Central community had achieved through the COPS effort, one of the Scouts decided to organize a similar effort in the Nevada-Lidgerwood area as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award Project.

With the support and encouragement of her troop leader and the active cooperation of the Spokane Police Department's COPS coordinator and neighborhood resource officer, the Senior Scout organized her sister Girl Scouts to recruit other neighborhood adolescents who could be trained by the police as youth volunteers. She persuaded a local business owner to provide a facility on Mount Spokane for training youth volunteers—and also to "provide a hiking excursion, swimming, horseback riding, and meal for each junior volunteer that is trained."[1] Many girls volunteered, as did neighborhood boys who had never thought scouting was "cool."

One of the volunteers' first projects was to reclaim their neighborhood park. They documented and reported graffiti, trash, broken lights, and other unsanitary and unsafe conditions. They put on summer campouts in the park for neighborhood children, and the Spokane police and a special group of adult neighborhood COPS volunteers provided extra patrols.

Over the following year the Nevawood Youth Volunteers began to take on a wide range of projects, including "Knock and Nag" for reminding residents to keep their doors locked, a blanket drive for residents in need, and Alley Watch—occasional 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. outdoor vigils in areas formerly experiencing high rates of burglary, carried out under the supervision of the police. Although their projects take them out into the community several times a week, the volunteers' planning meetings are held just once a month and are conducted entirely by the youth. As a group they decide which of the many projects requested by the community to take on.

The Spokane Police Department Spearheads Police-Community Collaboration

The department provides one of the finest examples of outcomes that can be achieved through community-oriented policing services. The COPS initiatives already described in this report are natural products of a departmental approach that involves officers in community collaborations for:

- Identifying problems.
- Analyzing the specific facets of problems that have been identified (who is involved, when, how, and why).
- Taking logical steps and community action to resolve problems.
- Evaluating the outcomes that have been achieved.

Key to Spokane's community policing approach is the chief's strong encouragement of actions by officers that go well beyond traditional law enforcement and crime prevention approaches, particular those addressing problems involving Spokane's children and teens. As a result of the motivation

Family Focus Coalition and WSU/Spokane County Cooperative Extension

"COPS West Neighbor Days" parade features quilt made by COPS West volunteers from an elementary school student's design.

provided by the chief and supervising officers, individual officers in Spokane have developed a range of approaches for creating safer environments for children and teens.

One example is "Every 15 Minutes," a 2-day, 1-night program designed by an officer who was sickened by a number of visits he had to make to inform parents that their teens had died in alcohol-related accidents on prom night. The program, provided in all Spokane high schools in late spring, is entirely funded by local businesses and carried out on a volunteer basis by officers and their spouses. Two days of activities involving the junior and senior high students culminate in a multimedia performance by the students that obviously captures their minds and emotions and leads to their immediate decisions not to drink and drive. Since the program was initiated, there have been no more alcohol-related fatalities in Spokane on prom night.

The COPS-N-Kids annual car and truck event held at the end of the summer is another initiative officers have launched to deal with an ongoing youth problem. As in many cities, teens from all over the area would drive to a central location to "cruise." Many cities have cracked down on cruising by passing and enforcing ordinances prohibiting this activity. However, officers in Spokane went to bat for the teens, pointing out that–if properly monitored and directed–cruising was not innately bad for the community or for the participants. Officers convinced auto businesses and adults with auto-related hobbies, such as show-car owners, to come down to the cruising area and help the teens maintain their vehicles. The annual end-of-summer car and truck event, including free food and drinks, is promised to the teens if cruising has remained trouble free during the preceding months. Cruising in Spokane reportedly is an essentially wholesome activity since the officers have been involved, and adults as well as youth look forward to the August COPS-N-Kids event.

Police Create a Special Boy Scout Explorer Post

The final police effort to be described in this report is a traditional youth development approach, a Boy Scouts of America Explorer program. But, as is typical of many of the youth approaches in Spokane, the program is integral to the philosophy and implementation of community-oriented policing services. The Explorer post was started in 1987 as part of the chief's plan to create a volunteer program in which officers carry out youth development and community development activities with the active cooperation of neighborhood volunteers. In addition to the Explorer post volunteers, others in the volunteer program are police reserve officers, Spokane Community College students (co-ops), senior volunteers, and volunteer specialists.

The chief realized that, when provided with productive opportunities, older teens can be a powerful community asset rather than a community problem. The chief involved an organization with a long history of providing proven youth development programs—in this case Boy Scouts of America. He delegated the creation of an Explorer post to a police officer with prior professional experience in working with older teens who had been recognized for his previous volunteer contributions to the community.

After initial discussions with the national organization to learn the fundamentals of the Explorer program, the officer visited posts formerly created in other police departments where Scouts were drawn from urban neighborhoods. The initial set of Scouts recruited for the program were older teens with an interest in law-enforcement careers who, according to the officer leading the post, "were guaranteed to succeed—teens who were already leaders in church groups or in school." And succeed they did. They enthusiastically completed the rigorous training carried out at the Spokane Police Academy and began working side by side with uniformed officers and adult volunteers in highly visible positions. They gained positive publicity for the post and their communities. But that was just the beginning of the program.

The intent of the post was to involve adolescents who had little or no previous opportunity for community leadership—not by waiving the qualifications for Explorer Scouts—but by stimulating younger teens to meet the requirements for joining the post. A cornerstone of this approach is the L.E.A.D. (Leadership, Education, and Development) program provided under the supervision of the officer who directs the Explorer post. Spokane girls and boys in the eighth and ninth grades can apply for the program and are selected in part to reflect the ethnic diversity in the city. L.E.A.D. students participate in an intensive training program similar to that of Explorer Scouts but more appropriate for their stage of development. Training not only involves physical exercise but also exercises for increasing communications skills, teamwork and, as is explicit in the program name, leadership skills. Officers who are involved in working with L.E.A.D. participants, including the chief, are drawn from all ranks.

Students who would like to become Explorers but are having difficultly making the school grades required by the program are given extra support. As is common in Spokane,

other youth organizations help provide this support. For example, the Explorer leading a police department horse at a Nevawood fundraiser had been tutored by several of the Nevawood youth volunteer participants. Uniforms are donated by local businesses as is other equipment so the economic realities faced by many Spokane teens are not an obstacle to participation. Together, as in many other approaches involving Spokane youth, police and community members are working hand in hand to help children and adolescents reach their full potential and to create safe places in the nonschool hours.

Successful Efforts in Spokane Benefit From the City's History of Forming Coalitions to Address Shared Problems

In addition to police leadership and participation in youth development activities, Spokane has benefited from wide collaboration with other youth-serving public agencies and community groups. Among these are:

- **The citywide Youth Commission,** established in 1985 and composed of citizen members (seven adults and four teens) and advised by one board composed of representatives from a broad spectrum of youth-serving agencies and another board composed of teen representatives throughout the city. The Youth Commission has created a number of teams for addressing specific issues, including the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition; the Spokane Service Team, which provides teens educational preparation and opportunities for carrying out community service projects in small groups; and neighborhood-based implementation of Project Get REAL (Recreational Alternatives for Leisure), which provides field trips, preparation for employment classes, and leadership training in the nonschool hours.

- **Coalitions of public agencies and private youth organizations.** These agencies have committed to working together to support the Youth Commission's efforts by providing comprehensive services for children most at risk of committing violence—especially those who have little or no family support or support from schools. As needs for services are identified, representatives of agencies form ad hoc groups to solve problems.

  Another group, headed by a concerned parent and composed of representatives from the police department, child protection services, a private foster care/adoption agency, a local university, and several other volunteers living in the community, is implementing a plan to ensure that runaway and thrownaway children are housed at night in safe places—preferably in the homes of families in their own neighborhood.

  More comprehensive services for street children include a "head-start type program" for the babies and toddlers of homeless teens. School "classes" for small groups of teens meet during regular school hours. Parenting classes and recreational activities are provided for the teens in nonschool hours. These are all held in a downtown building where meals are provided for both the teens and their babies.

- **Neighborhood-based teams of youth-serving organizations, public agencies concerned with youth, and neighborhood volunteers.** These are extending grassroots collaboration throughout the city, with the Spokane Police Department as the central coordinating agency for 14 neighborhood coalitions. Although Family Focus classes were limited to the West Central community at the time of the onsite study, the WSU community resource coordinator was working throughout the city and, as of the date of this report, Family Focus activities are being carried out in nine neighborhoods.

Spokane Benefits From a Spectrum of Youth-Serving Organizations That Provide a Range of Programs for Meeting the Comprehensive Needs of Many Children in the City

Some of the organizations that help Spokane are independent providers; others are affiliated with national organizations participating in this study as well as equally fine organizations such as Camp Fire Boys and Girls and the YWCA. Many of the nationally affiliated organizations are independently serving their more traditional constituencies. For example, the downtown YMCA provides many programs found in "Y" branches around the country for individual and family members ranging from infants to seniors. Personal fitness activities include an aquatics program and "Adventure Club" programs in the hours before and after school in six elementary schools.

As previously described, the West Central Community Center offers Girl Scout and 4-H activities and a range of opportunities provided by other independent organizations. These choices are also available in Spokane schools providing afterschool programs. The coordination that occurs among youth organizations in a single location is perhaps exemplified best by the 9-day Spokane KidsWeek held each summer

in one of Spokane's largest parks. More than 20 youth-activity providers—public and private, commercial and not-for-profit—join forces to celebrate Spokane's children and "to recognize our youth and let them know they are valued." The effort is funded by city agencies and private businesses, which sponsor an extensive set of age-graded activities from "music and movement for toddlers" to "blood and guts" science workshops for early adolescents to midnight bowling and miniature golf for older teens. The reason for this collaboration is captured by the KidsWeek motto . . ."Because Kids are an Important Community Resource."

Endnotes

1. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, 1994, *Active Firearm Licenses: License Type by District Statistics*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

2. Teske, Raymond, Jr., ed., 1995, *Crime and Justice in Texas*, Huntsville, Texas: Sam Houston Press.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. City of Arlington, Texas, 1993, *City of Arlington Crime Prevention Action Plan*, Arlington, Texas: City of Arlington, p. 6.

6. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington also has a camp facility on the shore of a lake. Since this study focused on safe places in the nonschool hours in urban settings, this facility was not included.

7. Arlington [Texas] Police Department, 1994, *Administrative Services Bureau School Services Unit Standard Operating Procedures*, Arlington, Texas: Arlington Police Department, p. 1.

8. Cormany, Gerrit, and Carol Wendle, 1990, *Making the Grade: A Report Card on Spokane Area Youth*, Spokane, Washington: Spokane Area Chamber of Commerce. As suggested by the Caring Community Model, the statistics for Spokane were compared with national trends and trends in other cities; these comparisons are not presented in this report since the intent is to compare issues identified across the three study sites.

9. Information provided by John Newkirk, Chair, Spokane County Cooperative Extension Office, Washington State University, 222 Havana, Spokane, Washington 99202.

10. Thurman, Quint, and Phil Bogen, 1994, *A Final Report to the Spokane Police Department: An Implementation and Short-Term Impact Assessment of the 1993 Neighborhood Resource Officer Demonstration Project*, Spokane, Washington: Washington State Institute for Community-Oriented Policing.

11. Dusik, Harmony, 1994, *Girl Scout Gold Award Project Form—Appendix G–5: Nevawood Junior Volunteer Update*, Spokane, Washington: Harmony Dusik.

Chapter 4
Exemplary Partnerships Between Police and Youth Organizations

> In any business—retail or manufacturing, service or government—the people in the trenches are the best sources of ideas on how to do their jobs better. They see the daily needs of their customers and conceive ways of improving services or the delivery of services. Any business that ignores this rich source of practical help does so at its peril. . . We have encouraged our employees—uniformed and civilian, paid and volunteer—to find ways to bring our citizens into this partnership.[1] *Terry Mangan, Chief of Police, Spokane*

Police chiefs, other police department managers, officers, and civilian staff interviewed for this report were acutely aware of the serious risks faced by children and adolescents in their communities. Rather than placing blame on the children themselves or on their families, they recognized that ongoing attention, both to conditions that place children at risk and to supports that help them succeed, are very much part of their responsibility as professionals and as civic-minded individuals.

Across the three cities that were the subjects of the case studies, police at all ranks were carrying out a spectrum of activities for responding to the needs of youth organizations and for supporting their efforts to provide safe and productive undertakings for school-age children. These included:

- Chiefs and other top-ranking police actively participating on youth organizations' advisory boards.
- Chiefs and other top administrators publicly honoring youth for community service and encouraging and acknowledging officers who voluntarily provided leadership for school-age children in their off-duty hours.
- Officers of all ranks leading traditional youth programs—frequently for older youth living in inner-city areas who ordinarily would not care to participate or, if they did, would not meet qualifications for participation.
- Officers and civilian staff serving on juvenile review boards and helping select and divert young offenders from the juvenile justice system to productive community service assignments.
- Officers helping to identify other youth in need of youth services and helping ensure provision of such services, including afterschool activities that help build social and academic skills.
- Officers actively working with other service providers to identify and better serve abused and neglected youth.
- Patrol officers regularly dropping by centers and other youth program sites to watch and cheer activities.
- Neighborhood and community police officers regularly participating in neighborhood organization meetings to help assess the needs of children. They also play a key role in helping community members realize that programs involving at-risk adolescents are more a boon than a threat to neighborhood safety.
- Neighborhood and community police officers routinely involving children and teens in playing a major role in keeping their communities safe. Rather than viewing the kids as the source of the problem, they make them part of the solution.

Police Activities at the Three Exemplary Sites Took Many Forms

The Bristol, Arlington, and Spokane case studies presented in the preceding chapter illustrate in detail the specific forms of police activity that contributed to the exemplary nature of the partnerships between police and youth organizations in these three sites. Cities and communities that are experiencing the same challenges that Bristol, Arlington, and Spokane faced may be able to benefit from these sites' experiences. Highlights of the activities discussed in the case studies are presented below.

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In **Bristol, Connecticut,** participation in the city's Juvenile Diversion Program and other such collaborative efforts gives officers the opportunity to better serve youth at risk or those that may have been abused. Police have a strong commitment to "walk-and-talk" community policing, whereby on a daily basis they interact positively with citizens of all ages, including children at the Family Center. More specifically:

- As they participate in projects sponsored by the youth organizations, such as the creation of posters against drugs, police work directly with children in neighborhoods where they appear to be especially at risk.
- In their interactions with children, police officers learn about family situations that can be ameliorated through referrals to specialized community agencies, and occasionally they may learn about activities, such as child abuse and drug offense activities, that require law enforcement action.
- Police officers provide special training for youth organization participants to help them deal with gangs, safety, and other issues.
- Police have turned Neighborhood Watch from complaint sessions about crime into positive citizen participation in monitoring of gang and drug activity and in provision of block parties and other wholesome activities for children.
- Police devote many hours in the selection and monitoring process and in juvenile review board meetings where appropriate placement for each juvenile is arrived at jointly.

In **Arlington, Texas,** preventing crime involving children ranks among the highest police department priorities, as was made evident by tributes from youth organization staff interviewed for this project and by the large number of civilian and sworn staff, including the chief, who showed up at a meeting to learn about police crime prevention efforts. These efforts involved a wide spectrum of independent crime prevention programs implemented by the police department, approaches carried out as part of the City of Arlington Crime Prevention Action Plan, formal support to youth organizations, and volunteer activities by officers at every rank in the department. Following is a sample of their efforts:

- Police officers conduct 25 short, age-appropriate youth education programs for children from kindergarten through sixth grade.
- To familiarize the children with police, the officers distribute trading cards with officers' pictures, their descriptions, and safety tips.
- The police School Resource Officer Program provides a liaison officer between schools and the police department. School Resource Officers regularly stop at youth centers and maintain contacts with and refer children to other community agencies providing services for children. Some become Boy Scout leaders.
- Police allayed citizens' fears that a teen center would bring gangs and juvenile delinquents into their neighborhoods. They promised an enhanced police presence in the area surrounding the center. Residents now welcome the teen center and the increased police visibility it has brought to the neighborhood.

In **Spokane, Washington,** The police chief motivated his officers to develop and participate in a host of creative activities that put officers side by side with other community members in channeling youthful energy into crime prevention and other positive activities. Partnerships with Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other organizations devoted to youth development are key features of police activity in this city. Following are some of their activities:

- The "Every 15 Minutes" approach involves high school seniors in several days of intensive planning and activities culminating in their own multimedia presentation that graphically shows the grave consequences of drunk driving and has virtually eliminated drunk-driving fatalities on prom night.
- Police sponsor an August COPS-N-Kids truck and car event that enlists the participation of auto-related businesses to teach kids vehicle maintenance and keep teen "cruising" trouble free.
- Thanks to partnership with police, youth organization participants can do "real" policing by helping prevent crime. Nevawood COPS Youth Volunteers are mid-teen Girl Scouts and other girls and boys who report graffiti, trash, and broken lights and conduct summer campouts in the park for neighborhood children.

- A police officer leads a Boy Scout Explorer Post specially created to recruit adolescents with no previous opportunity for community leadership. Interested boys and girls participate in an intensive training program involving not only physical exercise but exercises to increase their communication, teamwork, and leadership skills.

Coalitions Among Police, Local Officials, Community Leaders, and Youth Organizations Develop Strategies

Partnerships that include a spectrum of community institutions and organizations promote comprehensiveness of services that endure over the long term; experience in all three sites bears this out. In developing and implementing Bristol's approach to providing safe places for youth, for instance, Bristol Youth Services drew on information gathered by the police department, schools, and community agencies as well as on the joint efforts of local officials, community and business leaders, and directors of public and private agencies and service organizations that constituted the Greater Bristol Community Leadership Team.

Arlington, particularly, undertook a long period of coalition building to ensure that the approach chosen met the real needs of the community to be served. The local United Way's Priorities Committee ranked problems and made recommendations, and a committee representing not only youth organizations but also the police department, the mayor's office, the public library, the recreation department, and civic, religious, and business groups expanded perspectives even further to come up with an action plan that culminated in the establishment of centers of safety for children and teens in the afterschool hours.

In Spokane, collaborative efforts have long been a hallmark in the city's history. Spearheaded by Spokane's Youth Commission, interdisciplinary teams have addressed such issues as teen pregnancy and developed community service and recreational projects for youth. Their efforts have spawned numerous coalitions of public agencies and private youth organizations to supply more supports for more teens and children, such as runaways, street children, and teen parents. In addition, the Spokane Police Department coordinates the work of 14 neighborhood coalitions of public and private organizations serving youth and neighborhood volunteers.

Comprehensive, sustained, and creative partnerships are integral to community oriented policing services, as amply shown in Spokane's COPS West ministation, which depends for its existence on the efforts of volunteers, many drawn from participants in Washington State University's Family Focus program, and representatives of the Office of the District Attorney and Adult and Juvenile Probation and Parole. Indeed, the driving force behind community policing is police participation in the community on an ongoing basis to further crime prevention, neighborhood problem solving, and community-based solutions to crime and juvenile delinquency. The close bonds needed between citizens and police were forged in joint celebrations, coalition meetings, and day-to-day contacts with youth wherever they congregated.

While the organizations in Bristol support each other's efforts, and organizations in Arlington cooperatively divide up areas of the city to be served, Spokane is remarkable for the coordination that brings multiple organizations into the same location in the nonschool hours. Enduring neighborhood-based partnerships between city agencies and organizations are being generated and sustained by the COPS programs organized by the Spokane Police Department. By physically housing neighborhood volunteers and representatives from key city agencies in COPS ministations in a growing number of Spokane neighborhoods, agencies are able to coordinate services and activities on a minute-by-minute basis. And by routinely involving COPS Youth Volunteers and participants in other youth organizations in COPS ministation meetings and activities, both neighborhood adults and professionals have the opportunity to stay tuned in to the real concerns of neighborhood children and to respond quickly to their ongoing and emerging needs.

The most comprehensive partnerships can have major payoffs, as shown in Spokane, where they have led to neighborhood revitalization and the development of youth as active community participants and leaders. The ultimate result should be a reduction of crime, as has already happened in Spokane's West Central neighborhood.

> "The payoffs for giving our young people the right stuff are all around us: better community leadership, informed citizenship, and increased vocational skills. Personal health is improved and family life is stronger. A solid, secure next generation can mean less delinquency, fewer family breakups, fewer problems with alcohol and other drugs, and a happier, more vibrant community." *Washington State University Cooperative Extension*[2]

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What You Can Do to Provide Safe, Constructive Activities for At-Risk Youth

The essential measures taken in Arlington, Bristol, and Spokane are similar. Leaders in each city gathered information needed to assess the status of their youth. They faced hard problems head on and came up with action plans to address multiple factors that were endangering kids' lives.

Rather than reinventing ways to prevent violence and promote wholesome development, they figured out who in the community already had approaches likely to be most effective. This included the police, directors of nationally affiliated youth organizations, and other public youth-serving agencies—schools (administrators, counselors, and teachers), social services, health and treatment organizations, and juvenile justice practitioners including judges, district attorneys, and probation officers.

Your city may already have carried out some of the steps described in this report. However, because violence involving youth has multiple causes, cities that carry out multiple concerted actions are more likely than others to bring youth problems under sustained control. The following steps carried out in the case study sites are offered as a checklist to consider actions your city might take.

Police chiefs and other law enforcement executives can:

- Get to know the directors of youth-serving agencies and be willing to sit on their advisory boards and on community coalitions addressing youth issues.
- Encourage officers to volunteer at youth organizations in the community and publicly reward them for their efforts.
- Incorporate joint activities between police and youth-serving organizations into the day-to-day operation of the department.

Directors of youth organizations and agencies can:

- Introduce themselves and their organizations to the police chief and welcome a police presence on and around their premises.
- Invite police to put on prevention programs with the children and adolescents they serve and to participate in recreational activities for youth.
- Participate in city task forces that deal with youth issues, in neighborhood coalitions to advocate for safe activities for youth, and in community antidrug, anticrime efforts.
- Work with police and child protection agencies to identify and provide services to youth who may be perpetrators or victims of crime.
- Work with police and community leaders in offering their centers as places where troubled teens can perform community service.
- Advocate for youth among local officials and legislative bodies and teach young participants to be advocates.
- Work with other youth-serving organizations in joint ventures on a continuing basis.
- Get to know the educational and religious leaders in the community and find ways to have fruitful working relationships or to plan comprehensive solutions to common problems.

Community coalitions and collaborations can:

- Make sure they have a strong police, youth organization, and at-risk youth presence.
- Talk to police and others to determine the scope of delinquency and the range of adolescent experiences that contribute to it.
- Find out what services are currently available for at-risk kids.
- Assess the needs of youth for wholesome skill-building activities that they find fun after school.
- Find or advocate for places that can house afterschool programs where they are the most needed, operated by organizations that have demonstrated experience in providing them.

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Local officials and other community leaders can:

- Find out from the organizations that work with kids what kids' greatest needs are.
- Find ways public agencies (such as youth-serving and public housing agencies) can collaborate to keep youth off the streets and in safe activities.
- Help launch or participate in coalitions dedicated to this goal.
- Wherever possible, promote a comprehensive approach to delinquency prevention that involves both police and youth-serving organizations with demonstrated experience in serving teens.

This report has provided more complete descriptions of these steps as taken by the organization leaders in the three case study cities. Their actions represent an arduous undertaking, and they willingly shared their experiences so that this report could be written. They are also prepared to provide advice and support to you. Their names and information for contacting them are furnished in an appendix. They will be glad to hear of your commitment to provide safe, productive places for our Nation's youth.

Endnotes

1. Spokane Police Department, 1995, *Community Oriented Policing Programs*, Spokane, Washington: Spokane Police Department.
2. Thomas, Robert E., 1989, *Washington 4–H: Today and Tomorrow*, Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Cooperative Extension.

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Appendix
Information Resources

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